seem to be inadequate arrangements for crowd control on the occasion of such an important festival. The report of the Government of Uttar Pradesh, for example, states that there were only one Sub-Inspector and one Naib Tehsildar on duty at the bridge. As mentioned by some Members and Home Minister Yesterday, there have been mismanagement and lack of proper precautions on the part of the authorities. The detailed reasons for the tragedy will, no doubt be available as soon as the inquiry reports come in. But we hope that the other State Governments would, in the light of these incidents, isue appropriate directions to their field officers to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (Andaman and Nicobar Islands) . Simply suspending of one Naib Tehsildar would not do *(Interruptions)*

MR CHAIRMAN I am on my legs Please sit down

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN · I am on my legs. You please resume your seats

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA (Mumbai South) He has told about Uttar Pradesh only and not about Madhya Pradesh *(Interruptions)**

[English]

MR CHAIRMAN Nothing is going on record

*(Interruptions)**

MR CHAIRMAN There is no rule, which allows you to seek clarifications We must go by the rules

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN You are a senior Member There is no rule which allows you seeking clarifications in this House

(Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN Nothing will go on record except what I said

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT (Shajapur) I am on a point of order My point of order is that *(Interruptions)* please allow me

[English]

MR CHAIRMAN There is no point of order

16.11 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Flood Situation and Natural Calamities in Different Parts of the Country

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now we go to the other item of the Business of this House That item is regarding flood situation and natural calamities in different parts of the country and it should be moved by Prof. Prem Singh Chandumajra.

PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA (Patiala) : Mr Chairman, Sir, under Rule 193, I want to draw the attention of the Government on an important matter which belongs to the whole country

[Translation]

Mr Chairman, Sir, if you go through the facts showing the damage done by the floods, you will come to know that every year, floods not only destroy crops worth crores of rupees, but also damage houses and above of all thousands of cattle and hundreds of people die due to it For example, in 1995, more than 600 people died, more than 2.2 lakh houses damaged and 1 66 lakh cattle died all over the country. In 1988 the floods caused more damage than this, specially in Punjab where Patiala city was fully inundated and as a result property worth millions of rupees was damaged due to it The same situation was in Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Firozpur cities of Punjab Likewise in Haryana, (English) last year, more than 50,000 inhabitants were compelled to come into terms

[Translation]

I am of the opinion that the Government is not serious enough to check damage on this account This problem was not taken seriously and the measures taken in this regard were all temporary one. A certain amount was made available for flood relief in anticipation of flood and it was taken for granted that the flood will come and this much amount will be made available for this purpose, but that too was not properly allocated The assistance as well as funds should be provided The Central Government provided Rs 800 crore in 1994-95 and Rs 1130 crore in 1995-96 for this purpose This amount is being enhanced every year but the same is being misused The Government did not pay any heed to it In 1988, the Government had issued Rs 100 corre for flood relief out of which Rs 32 crore were spent as administrative expenses What relief did people get if Rs 32 crore were spent on jeeps, aerial survey, diesel and payment of TA, DA? The patwaris and tehsildars also take their shares from it but the affected people get nothing out of this relief amount.

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* Not Recorded

The concession of Rs. 500 per acre is virtually no help. Mr.Chairman, Sir, the loss of farmers due to floods is really a matter of grave concern. The Government has not shown the much expected seriousness in this regard. The National Water Resources Commission was set up in 1983. The hon. Prime Minister is its Chairman, the Minsiter of Water Resources is its deputy chairman and the Chief Ministers of the States are its members. Sir, two meetings of the commision were held in October 1985 and 1987 respectively. It is the seriousness of the Government. No permanenet solution of the problem has been found and the extra water flows away to Pakistan. Several parts of the country, at present, are facing the drought problem due to lack of water but the Government is not thinking to utilise this extra water. I, therefore, would like to suggest the Government to make the country flood proof just as it has been done in Russia. Rivers, in Russia have been canalised and thus people have been saved from its danger. Even Americans never face the ire of floods, 50 years have past since we became independent but still we are facing the fury of floods. The permanent solution of this problem can only be found if the Government takes action on my suggestions.

My first suggestion is that the Government should take up dredging work which will increase the flow of the river and the river's capacity as well. It will help in proper disposal of water and the danger of flood can be averted.

The embankments of the rivers are made of mud and therefore it is wahsed away when rain comes. My suggesstion is that the embankments should be constructed with the help of stones which are available free in mountains. The Government has to pay a lot of amount as compensation to the flood victims but if this money is utilised for the constructions of stone built embankments, a permanent solution of the flood can be achieved.

Another suggestion is that irrigation projects should be prepared. An amount of Rs. 50 thousand crore has been spent so far on these projects but only 20 million acres of land has been brought under irrigation cover. the reason behind it is the delay in projects which could not provide the desired benefit. If these projects are commissioned in time, the danger of flood can be averted and water for irrigation can be provided to the people. It can generate multi-purpose benefits. It can control the floods and by storing this water in dams, we can use it for irrigation purposes.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, power generation by thermal power plants is costlier. The power generation from the hydel projects will be cheaper besides it will contain the pollution. When the supply of coal to the thermal power plants of Punjab was not made in time, I brought this thing into the notice of the then Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He instructed the Ministry of Railways and the coal was supplied to the projects. The problem of coal is not only being faced by Punjab but by other States also. Irrigation projects can solve these problems but unfortunately the projects are being delayed. The construction work at Thein dam in Punjab is going on for the last several years. The initial cost of the project was Rs. 65 crore but now it has escalated to Rs. 2650 crore. It is still not known as to how long will it take to complete this project. The Union Government does not provide funds to the State Government of Punjab to tackle floods and as a result the flood waters of Vyas and Satluj rivers cause heavy damage to the State. When the issue of water arises, we talk of 'Riparian Law' i.e. the regions which suffer the loss due to flood, should have the right to use the water. Therefore, we demand water for Punjab as per the 'Riparian Law'. Some day back, I had given a suggestion for this purpose during Zero hour. There is a Ghagghar river which flows through Patiala, Ambala, Kurukshetra, Hissar and Sangroor. If Haryana, Himachal Preadesh and Punjab jointly construct a dam, there, flood can be prevented besides the problem of potable water in Chandigarh can be solved and Patiala, Sangroor, Kurukshetra and Ambala districts can be provided water for irrigation purposes. I, through you, would like to urge upon the Government of India that it should provide maximum aid for this purpose and that dam should be constructed so that Punjab and Haryana could be saved from the danger of flood.

In the last, I would like to suggest that till the time, the Government finds a permanent solution of this problem, it would be better for the Government to introduce crop insurance scheme to protect the people from the danger of flood and natural calamities. Here, if the light of a insured vehicle is broken, the owner gets full compensation for it but the farmer gets Rs. 500 per acre if his crop worth Rs. 10000 is destroyed. Therefore, the Government should introduce crop insurance scheme as soon as possible. As a permanent solution of this problem what Morarji Desai's Government thought in 1977, is very important. Before that, Shri KL Rao, the Minister of Irrigation in Indira Gandhi's Government had suggested to link the northern rivers with southern rivers. If it is implemented, the country can be saved from the flood as well as from the drought. Our position is like the man who had two daughters. One of them was married to a farmer and the other to a potter. When the monsoon arrived some one asked the farmer as to how his daughters were doing. He replied that one of them is suffering due to rain and another one for want of rain. So, if it rains then there is flood and if it does not rain, the drought causes havoc. Therefore, it would be better if the river link scheme is implemented. With these words, I conclude ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please sit down. The first name is of Prof. Prem Singh Chandumajra and the second name is of Shri Uddhab Barman. One hon. Member is to move or initiate the discussion. The name of Shri Uddhab Berman is there in the Party list. He will be called at due time.

Now Shri Dhananjaya Kumar will speak.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR (Mangalore) : In the history of this august House, we have commenced with the discussions on the situation of floods as well as drought conditions prevailing in various parts of the country. It has been a regular feature in this House to initiate such discussions specially during the Monsoon Session. This year, this Session is all the more important because this is also being considered as the Budget Session.

We have been receiving news about the flood situation getting worsened in various parts of the country, specially this year, in the North, in the Western region, in the North-East and also in the southern States. We have also seen that there have been aerial surveys conducted by not less than the Prime Minister of this country himself. I would say this again has become a mere ritual. After conducting the aerial survey, the Prime Minster would stand up in this House and say that he was helpless, that his hands were tight, that the Finance Commission had already decided the modalities for distribution of Central assitance which was available to various States.

If we go deep into this problem this is nothing but a real human problem. The topography of this country itself suggests that we must think of a long-ranging programme which would have a permanent solution for such havocs. I would like to remind this august House the ambitious programme like the linking of the Ganga and the Cauvery which was though of and which was envisaged by an eminent Minister in the Government of India, Minister for Water Resources, Dr. K.L. Rao. Unfortunately, such a project has never been implemented and always we find that we are unable to provide funds for implementing such ambitious programmes. I would tell you that this would definitely find an everlasting solution for the problem which is being faced by the countrymen during every monsoon season. This time, Karnataka, I should say, was saved to a great extent from the havocs of the floods, but instead we have drought like conditions in major portions of the State of Karnataka.

The rains have just begun. The other day, there has been a heated discussion in this House regarding release of water from the river Cauvery to Tamil Nadu.

Due to drought conditions and due to scanty rainfall in the catchment area, the reservoirs built on the river Cauvery have become practically empty. The people of Tamil Nadu, of course, always look towards Karnataka for water on the river Cauvery. Now, they are armed with the Interim Award which has been passed by the Tribunal and very often they also go and knock at the doors of the law courts. How do we find a permanent solution to all these problems?

Sir, now even the South India also has been lashed by the rains. There were very heavy rains in the three southern States, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. There have been 34 deaths due to floods. It has been a regular feature that very often severe cyclones hit the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh. This time also, due to servere cyclone there have been a number of deaths in the State of Andhra Pradesh. The cyclone had even reached the State of Mahrashtra this time. Knowing fully well the conditions prevailing in these parts of the country, should we not think of finding a permanent solution to this problem?

I would say that the norms which are set, maybe, by the Finance Commission or the modalities that have been fixed in the meeting of the Chief Ministers for giving assistance are totally unsatisfactory and they will not solve the problem. I would suggest that the Government of India should think of setting up a separate fund other than the National Calamity Relief Fund. The National Calamity Relief Fund, as we know, is a very small kitty. The Minister of Agriculture would always stand up and say that he is helpless, he is guided by the rules and regulations and he is guided by the deliberations of the Finance Commission. The other day, the Prime Minster and the Minister of Agriculture have been saying that they would make the releases in advance, if necessary. They said that the money which is due to various States from the National Calamity Relief Fund would be released in instalments and that the States could draw the money in advance.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The time allotted for this discussion is two hours and there is a list of a large number of hon. Members who want to speak in this discussion. It is quite natural that a large number of hon. Members are willing to participate in this discussion. Therefore, it is my request that no speaker should take more than 10 minutes.

DR. T. SUBBRAMI REDDY (Visakhapatnam) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, five minutes are sufficient, because everybody is repeating the same points.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Okay.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : Sir, my suggestion to the Government is to set up a separate fund out of which a definite assistance could be rendered to the States in case of a natural clamity. Under the present set of rules, they put so many restrictions for drawing the money from the Calamity Relief Fund. They say that unless a particular situation is declared as a national calamity, the fund cannot be provided. Then, while assessing the damage either to the standing crops or the loss of lives, loss of heads of cattle, there are certain guidelines.

Sir, we cannot solve the human problem looking from the coloured glasses and saying that we are bound by the set norms. I would request the Government of India to think of an alternative arrangement. A fund should be kept purely at the discretion of the Government of India which can be made use of as and when such calamities occur and immediate assistance should be rushed to the needy people. The Government of India should come to the rescue of the concerned States.

As you know, the State Governments are hard pressed for giving any kind of relief because their Budget is too small. They cannot envisage such a clamity. Only who are sitting here at the Centre, at the level of the Government of India, can think of such a mechanism so that the Government of India can always come to the assistance of the needy people.

So, I just leave this thinking with the hon. Minister of Agriculture and I would insist that at least now, though late but it is not too late, let a thinking be started for a project like linkage of Ganga-Cauvery so that the actual link between the North and the South be establised as early as possible and we could think of a permanent solution to such problems.

SHRI NURUL ISLAM (Dhubri) : Sir, flood, drought, earthquake, starvation and cyclone, these are the natural calamities in our country. The Government has not prepared any long-term or short-term policy for controlling these calamities during the last 50 years. So, my humble suggestion to the Government is that it should have a long term planning and short term measures against the flood, drought, earthquake, cyclone and storms. Sir, you know this country has got many rivers and the Government has not taken till today any strong measure. It does not have a definite water policy about these rivers. So my suggestion - as I have already suggested several times - is that the waters of rivers of Ganga, Brahmaputra and Cauvery should be declared national waters and any damage done by these rivers should adequately be compensated by the national Government.

Sir, the Brahmaputra river is one of the cruel and mighty rivers whose flood has caused extensive damage to the economy of Assam because Assam's economy is agro-based. Every year the flood damages its economic backbone. This thing has repeatedly been said to the Central Government but the Central Government has not paid any heed to it. The State Governments cannot adequately hadle this colossal problem until and unless the Central Government comes in a big way to the rescue of State Governments. Sir, for the last 25 years we have been hearing flood control and erosion of river Brahmaputra. The Government has undertaken certain projects for constructing dams in Dibong and Subansiri. These dams have not yet been constructed on this plea or that plea. But the actual reason is not known to us. The Government of India is avoiding it. By constructing these dams, it will get two more important projects. One is hydro electric project the power of which is less costly and another is irrigation project which can provide irrigation to half of the country . So the Government's negligence is not understood till today. For this negligence, the State of Assam is burning.

The Brahmaputra river is two kilometres in breadth in my district. Now its breadth has become 15 Km. It reached the Meghalaya boundary. Now you can understand the magnitude of this problem which cannot be tackled by the State Government which is suffering from acute financial problems.

So, my humble suggestion is that the Government should immediately undertake this dam construction work. The Government should take up the construction of hydroelectric and irrigation projects.

At the same time, I would suggest that the Government should undertake immediately to control the tributaries of the river Brahmaputra which causes major floods in the State. This flood not only causes damage to the standing crops, but also damages and blocks the roads and the bridges and disrupts communications. So, these floods should be controlled.

We have been used to live with floods due to the negligence of the Government of India for the last 50 years. As a result, we are not afraid of floods now. What is more dangerous is the erosion of soil caused by the mighty river Brahmaputra which every year not only renders lakhs of families homeless and landless, but destroys the most precious soil of the State, the soil which can produce three crops in a year without the application of any scientific means. Therefore, the Government must take all these points into consideration and save the State. The Central Government must come in a big way in this regard. It is understood that our national Government is called a national welfare Government. But we are shocked to say that it is acting otherwise so far as the State of Assam is concerned.

Since the last ten years, in my constituency alone, 60,000 familes have been rendered landless and homeless due to floods and erosion. I have repeatedly raised this matter on the floor of this august House, but nobody has listened to me. I simply cried in vain. These 60,000 families are now living like wild animals without water, without shelter, without food and without any modern amenities. This is the position. Government should immediately come up, before it is too late, with a comprehensive rehabilitation for these homeless and landless people of the Dhubri district and Goalpara district, in particular, and the State of Assam, in general.

The Government of India has constituted a Brahmaputra Flood Control Board, but it is only a lip sympathy. It is very sad that we are used to this lip sympathy. This Board does not have a Chairman for the last 20 years. It is not functioning at all for want of funds. This is the way in which the Government of India wants to control the floods of the river Brahmaputra.

So, my humble suggestion to the present Government is to have a sympathetic look at this problem of the State of Assam. I believe they will definitely take certain measures to control floods and revitalise the Brahmaputra Flood Control Board.

This year's flod is continuing. This Government's callousness shows that they did not care even to sent a team to visit the State in order to assess the magnitude of the situation. They are sitting tight here. At least, the Government of India can send a steam or an officer or a Minister to assess the magnitude of the situation. They are not doing that and they are just taking the plea that enough money has been given for flood relief to the State. We do not want to live on flood relief alone.

We want the protection measures. We want the flood control measure. Every year, we cannot suffer. So, we want that the Government should come in a big way to protect the State from flood and erosion of the river Brahamaputra in the State of Assam.

Lastly, I would like to draw your attention, rather the attention of the Government of India, to the fact that since the last fifty years, they are telling something about this dam but they are not taking any active and effective steps to construct it. So, my humble suggestion to this Government is that they should immediately see to it how far it is feasible. There are lots of feasibility reports. There are lots of technically feasible reports.

But all these have gone in vain at our cost. So, that is why the State of Assam is burning. We are blaming that the State of Assam is burning. If there is a lot of insurgency, if there is a lot of militancy, it is because of the negligence at every stage. If I could narrate it, not only in respect of flood and erosion measures but also in respect of communication and other things, there is negligence. They talk highly of infrastructural facilities in the State. But they are not doing it. They will not do. That is our experience during the last fiteen years. They talk highly of all these things. But they do nothing. So, my request is that before it is too late, the Government should come forward with a comprehensive planning to protect the economy of the State, protect the people of the State and protect the soil of the State from flood and erosion.

With these few words, I thank you very much for giving me the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I want to announce in this House that the Business Advisory Committee today have decided that this debate would conclude today. The Minister of Agriculture will reply at 7 p.m. I seek the cooperation of all the hon. Members in this regard.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam) : Sir, a number of hon. Members want to participate in this discussion. So, some more time may be allotted to this item...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : There are many Members who wish to participate in this discussion. So, the time should be increased.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It has already been decided that the debate would conclude today. The Minister will reply at 7 p.m.

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN (Trichur) : Respected Chairman, at the very outset, I would like to say that I find it very hard to explain in words the plight of the most unfortunate people of Kerala after the flood havoc this season. The official figures will speak for themselves. The number of personed died of flood is 31; the districts affected were 14 and the villages affected were 1015. The number of persons affected was 3.51 lakh. The numbers of persons injured was 114. The houses fully damaged were 1113. The number of houses partially damaged was 9945. The value of crops damaged was to the tune of Rs. 2664 lakh. To compensate this huge loss, it has been stated by our hon. Minister of Agriculture that the allotment as per the recommendations of the Tenth Finance Commission might be used. For the State of Kerala for the whole year the allotment is Rs. 55 crore. From this amount, two quarterly instalments that come up to approximately Rs. 26 crore were disbursed by the previous Central Government to the previous State Government in 1995 itself.

The advance was disbursed from the allotment made for the year 1996. I do not know how this can work. The Finance Commission has allotted Rs. 55 crore for the full year. And to compensate this huge loss. It has to be met from the total amount. If two instalments are given in advance. How can it work? We are not responsible for this advance. The Central Government should take the responsibility for this. We must get the full allotment of Rs. 55 crore as per the Finance Commission's allotment. That is our right legally also. You have to disburse it in full.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : They are yours. You take it. For Kerala, still we have Rs. 20.775 crore. If they require, they can take it. We will help them. It is their money as well as that of the Central Government. But we should receive message from you. I cannot send it by my special messenger. You come and take it.

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : That is not my point. My point is, out of Rs. 55 crore due to us for this year, the total of two quarterly instalment comes to approximately Rs.26 crore and this wad disbursed in 1995 by the previous Government to the previous State Government in advance. That should not be deducted from this year's allotment. That is my contention.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : But the money is still there . You exhaust it. I will compensate it ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI A.C. JOS (Idukki) : You are from the same party.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : Flood is not a party question.

SHRI A.C. JOS: I am only reminding the Minister to be more generous.

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : For that matter, we, all the 20 Members of Lok Sabha from Kerala, share the same view...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Raghavan, please address the Chair.

SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : Another problem which Kerala is facing is the problem of sea erosion. The damage that has been inflicted upon the people is such that hutments of thousands of fishermen have been washed away, properties of thousands have been swallowed by the Arabian Sea. Our valuable soil is also being eroded. So we have to protect the lengthy sea shore of more than 600 kilometres. But there is a financial constraint to protect the sea shore. The State Government is not able to do timely protection of the sea. Sometimes the State Government used to help us to protect the sea shore, to protect the houses of fishermen. But we have not received any help from the Central Government after 1992. We have submitted many schemes. We are submitting again. But my humble submission to the Minister for Argiculture is to protect us from the Arabian Sea. When the sea is in spate, the fishermen cannot go to sea and thus, they starve. We have to give them ration, we have to help them. So protection of the sea shore by erecting a wall is an urgent need. We did that in some parts. But that too requires maintenance. And a large portion is still to be protected. So, protection of the sea shore is an urgent task to save thousands of fishermen and their houses. From Trivandrum to Kasargod in every monsoon the Arabian Sea is so angry that it tries to swallow the soil, the fishermen's huts and coconut trees. This time also it has happened. So, liberal help should be given to the State Government's projects to erect sufficient protection walls, to strengthen the present protection walls and to construct the remaining parts of the sea shore.

On these two scores we need help. Please give us the full amount allotted by the Ninth Finance Commission and help us construct the protection walls along the Arabian Sea shore.

SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN (Barpeta) : Mr. Chairman Sir, it is already said that every year we have been discussing the subject of flood and drought. But concrete steps for the removal of this problem have been taken so far. In Assam we have already faced the first wave of flood and we are waiting for the other waves of flood because up to the month of September there is going to be different waves of flood in Assam damaging a lot of property, roads, communication system, etc.

In this year, the first waves has already affected 2650 villages. The crop area covered is 1,82,276 hectares; the population affected is 18,59,103 people and the human lives lost is twelve. Besides, there is loss or damage to the roads, bridges, etc.

16.58 hrs.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker *in the Chair*)

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I can cite the figure. Thirteen districts out of 23 districts have been affected by the flood, particularly Dhemaji district is the worst affected. So far 18,59,103 people are affected by the flood. The crop area affected is 1,82,276 hectares. Every year the flood is taking a toll of not only the wealth created by our people, but is also causing a great harm to the economy and also to the ecological balance of our State. The main reason for this flood is the torrential rains in the areas of Brahmaputra and its tributaries and Barrak and its tributaries. These torrential rains normally bring flood and cause a lot of damage to the people of the State and to its economy.

17.00 hrs.

Forty per cent of the water resources are being contributed by the rivers Barrak and Brahmaputra. But these water resources are still to be tapped in the the interest of the economic development of that area, social development of that area. There is a hydroelectric potential in that area. In the entire river system, it is estimated at 41,000 megawatt. The total hydel potential, is 84,000 megawatt in the country. Hardly four per cent to six per cent of the potential is being utilised. As a result of this, because of non-harnessing of the water resources in that area, it is creating flood and causing damage to the economy, which is a purely peasant dominated economy, in that area. So, everybody feels that the floods should be controlled.

So far as the steps taken to control the floods in that area, that is in rivers Brahmaputra, Barrak and their tributaries are concerned, some embankments were constructed but those were not sufficient. They could not protect the land. There is not only the flood damaging the entire crop and other properties of the people but there is a lot of erosion also. Practically, every year, hundreds of acres of land is being eaten away by the river Brahmaputra forcing the peasants to be landless agricultural labourers. Many of them are forced to go out to the town for earning their day-to-day livelihood. Land, which is of prime importance for agricultural development is being eroded and taken away not only by the river Brahmaputra and Barrak but also their tributaries, throughout the State. So, it is a very big problem for Assam.

At the same time, there is water drainage congestion also. As I have already said there are some measures taken for constructing embankments here and there but it has also created water logging in certain areas. This is creating a lot of problem for the peasants also. So, I think that the entire system and the measures which have already been taken, the entire thing needs to be reviewed in the interest that the peasantry can cultivate its land and they can develop their economy. A lot of relief is given by the State Government at present. The people of Assam are being given relief. There are about 136 relief camps where a lot of foodstuffs, etc. are being given. But this is not sufficient. The Central Government should come forward to help the flood affected people in the area.

Again, as a result of the erosion, as a result of flood, as a result of water drainage congestion, there is a lot of problem created in the entire area. Some ecological problems are also being created. So, necessarily, it is a question not only of control of floods. How to manage and how to moderate the waters of the rivers Brahmaputra and Barak? This is the moot question. We should utilise the water for the development of that area. We should utilise that not only for the development of that area but such water resources could be utilised for the development of the other parts of the country also.

So, at present, it is not only flood control that is required, but what is needed is management of water resources of that area so that not only the entire area of Assam is economically developed but other areas can also be helped for development.

So, we the people of Assam are demanding that these multi-mega projects which have been prepared by the Brahmaputra Board relating to the Brahmaputra, the Barak and their 38 tributaries should be completed. The Dehang, Subansiri and Tipaimukh projects should be completed. The Central Government should come forward to implement these projects because the State Governments cannot afford to spend so much money. Huge amount is required. So, it is impossible for the State Government alone to complete these projects. Inter-State problems are also there. There is Arunachal-Assam problem and there is Manipur-Mizoram-Assam problem. All these problems are there. So, the Central Government should come forward to settle this issue and make efforts to construct the dam so that not only is the flood moderated but the irrigation potential is also utilised. At the same time power generation can also be improved. So, with the completion of this dam, not only the flood is controlled but irrigation facilities and electric power generation also is improved. The people of that area, not only the people of Assam, but the people of entire. States will get some relief. They will get not only relief but it will also lead to devlopment of that area. they want to develop that area economically. So, taming the turbulent waters of the Brahmaputra and the Borak should be the priority consideration. So, I hope that instead of repeatedly discussing all these issues, the Central Government should come forward to have this programme completed so that all people of that area can feel that we can develop our area, not only that area but also contribute to the development of the entire country.

Therefore, I hope that while giving adequate funds to the State Governments, these measures will also be taken up. Again, I want to say that when there is flood in the entire State, in some parts of the country there are droughts. In some parts of the country there is flood, and in certain areas, like in some areas of Madhya Pradesh, there is drought. In Assam also, before this flood there was a drought condition. As a result of this drought situation *Ahu* crop has failed. Now, due to flood, cultivation problem is there. Now, it is plantation period. So, there is acute problem because of floods damaging in the seadlings. The people of Assam are facing problems, economic and other problems because of the drought and now because of flood. So, I hope that the Central Government in consultation with the State Government will come forward to help the people of the State so that the people can survive in spite of flood situation. And they can also help in developing the area. All the schemes which have already been prepared by the Brahmaputra Board should be earnestly taken up.

I hope the Central Government would, instead of having an indifferent attitude, extend a sympathetic attitude and help the people of that area so that the economy of not only the Assam State but also the entire North-East can be developed. So, I hope that the Central Government would come forward and help the people of that are to develop the economy by taming the rivers Brahmaputra and Borak.

With these words I conclude.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU (Rajapur) : Thank you, Sir. It is very unfortunate that every year we have to keep on discussing a situation arising out of flood in the first six months of the year and the situation arising out of drought in the next six months of the year. I would like to know and to be - enlightened from the hon. Agriculture minister about - how much money we have spent in the last 50 years on flood relief as well as on drought relief.

I remember, when we were students, we used to always hear of a scheme linking all the rivers of India. There was a scheme for linking Ganga with Cauvery: there was a scheme called 'garland' scheme; and there was a plan called Capt. Dastur Plan which would have linked all the rivers of the country and which would have helped in not only making available the scarce water which is very scarce now, but also would probably prevent flood and the situation arising out thereform. Probably this would also help in the national integration. It would have solved many problems including the availability of many things in the Ministry which he presides over and also would have helped in creating a large number of jobs in rural India. This would also prevent spending money on problems arising out of over-urbanisation. So, I wish that the Government also comes out with a White Paper on this issue about how much money has been spent and what action could be initiated now, though it is late. But better late than never; and we have to start the action plan on that count. I am more concerned about the national issues and I am also concerned about the issue which is arising in Maharashtra which also unfortunately has to face a situation of flood and drought in many parts.

I come from a place called Konkan which is an area on the shore of the sea. We always get floods: and water comes from the sea into the villages which are inhibited by fishermen. The flood relief operations that are really necessary could not be undertaken many times because of certain regulations imposed by the Central Government. You may be aware of the regulation which is arising out of the judgement of the Supreme Court which prevents any structures to be erected on the shores, up to 500 meters from the point where the sea touches the shore. This also causes tremendous hardships to the fishermen because they cannot even erect a structure, even if the old structure is dilapidated because of passage of time. I would request the hon. Minister to do something on this score.

I would also like to draw the attention of the House to a decision which we took earlier in the day that even the Minister of Surface Transport would be present here when this debate takes place so that he could also participate in it. I do not know whether that Minister is also present in the House besides the Minister of Agriculture. I would request the Minsiter concerned to look into this.

I am aware that the environment has to be protected at any cost. In addition to that, the lives of millions people who are solely dependent on fisheries and which is their main activity should also be protected; and a *via media* should be found out whereby our fishermen who are really living for more than 500 years at that place, should not be affected because of the judgment of the Supreme Court restricting the erection of building up to 500 meters from the sea shore so that they can erect small structures and carry on their activities. Fishermen cannot carry on their activity on hilltops; and they have to necessarily live there. Therefore, this problem needs to be looked into because flood dmages the source of livelihood very badly every year.

The Central relief which goes to a State is determined by the provisions of the Finance Commission. I am aware that the resources are very scarce and we cannot really keep on giving money or dole out money to the extent to which it is demanded. But whenever the natural calamity occurs, whether it is in Rajasthan, whether it is in West Bengal, whether it is in Assam or whether it is in Mahrashtra, the magnitude of calamity differs, and we cannot really foresee the situation. The Finance Commission which makes a report once in five years cannot keep on judging, what could be the damage that could be caused in the next five years. The people in the Finance Commission are not prophets and they can only make financial allocations. So, we must have some sort of a norm which enables the Central Government to come to the rescue of the State Government in the event of a major calamity which could arise.

I would definitely like to share the sentiment of my other firends from other States who said the lives of the people are devastated beacause of major natural calamities.

I would request the Minister to make a policy in such a manner that it also remains flexible and not to determine it by the provisions of the Finance Commission alone.

There is a need to have an integrated policy because water resources would not keep on increasing with the passage of time. And these are likely to deplete with more population and more urbanisation. There will be more demands on the already available water resources. So, I would request the hon. Minister to make flood relief operations a part of the overall operations where utilisation of water becomes a centre-point of planning. We should also spend more money on planning of water resources availability rather than curing it by making flood relief as a thrust of our acitivity.

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS (Kalahandi) : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so far as the flood situation is concerned, our country has often been prone to drought and flood. For years together, this House has discussed this issue. In spite of planning and several other provisions, we have failed to save our people from the natural calamities. That is why I would request this Hosue to express its serious concern and find out a way to save the poor people especially when the flood or drought occurs. When flood or drought occurs in this country, the poor people in the villages suffer a lot and nobody pays any heed to that problem. Merely by discussion or giving a statement does not solve the drought and flood situation permanently.

Orissa has been very much prone both to flood and drought. The districts of Ganjam, Puri, Kendrapara, Bolangir, Kalahandi and Sambalpur have suffered heavily due to floods. I will especially talk about my constituency, Kalahandi. It has drawn the attention of the whole nation. It has frequently suffered from drought. This year because of erratic rainfall or because of no rainfall in many parts of Kalahandi and Naupada districts of Orissa, we have witnessed serious drought conditions. It is not at all raining in the districts of Naupada and Kalahandi. The loss of crops has by now been to the extent of 60 per cent. I would request the hon. Minister of Agriculture to pay special attention to this and also instruct the concerned State Government to take necessary measures with regard to flood and drought situation in Kalahandi and Naupada districts.

Kalahandi and Naupada districts have been famous for drought. A lot of people have migrated from these districts to different part of our country in search of bread and butter. Many times starvation deaths and different kinds of diseases have occurred in these districts. All this has rocked the nation. When poverty is discussed, Kalahandi is not left out. When the leaders discuss poverty, they compare the drought situation of Kalahandi with Ehtiopia. That is why I would specially request the Government through you that instead of giving relief, permanent measures should be taken up. Hundreds of voluntary organisations have rushed into Kalahandi to undertake the relief work. And Government is spending a lot of money. It is of no use unless and until permanent measures are taken up.

The Indrawati River Project has been estimated at a cost of Rs. 232 crore. It was supposed to be completed in 1985. It would now take another five to ten years. The cost of the project has gone up to Rs. 1,200 crore. It is a project to irrigate 2,50,000 acres of land. It will generate 600 MW electricity on the other hand. We are inviting foreigners to have power projects in our country. But I do not know why such a hydropower project is being neglected in our country....*(Interruptions)*

We are inviting the multinationals. The Indira river project is undergoing survey for many years but it is yet to have a place in the Budget. If the Indira river irrigation project or the Tekhali river irrigation project would be there in Naupada district, it would have been beneficial for this area. There has been a survey and I think there has been a satellite survey of this Naupada district. We do not find water even below 200-300 feet but we do not think of such a region. The former Prime Ministers had gone there and visited that place, starting from Shri Rajiv Gandhi to Shri Narashimha Rao. Shri Chandra Shekhar had also gone there; he had gone by foot to many parts of the poverty stricken areas of Kalahandi and Naupada. In spite of all these the poverty situation has not been alleviated and permanent measures are not taken. When I was Member of the Ninth Lok Sabha, I had demanded for deep borewell in Naupada and Kalahandi and other dry areas as a permanent measure but the Government did not pay and heed to that. Now also, nobody is paying any attention to this.

I specially request the hon. Minister of Agriculture and I think he is very much aware of the sad plight of Naupada and Kalahandi. I think most of the party people of his party had also been to Kalahandi in 1986-87. Kalahandi was rich in agriculture. In 1936, when Bengla witnessed drought, many varieties of rice were supplied from Kalahandi. So, Kalahandi and Naupada are famous for mineral deposits but I do not know why permanent measures are not taken to save the people from permanent attack of drought and flood. I would specially request the Government, through you, to take permanent measures in my constituency, Kalahandi, which is most famous for its problems. These problems have been in existence for years together. There should be a permanent solution to these problems.

[Translation]

SHRI GANGA CHARAN RAJPUT (Hamirpur) : Mr. Spekaer, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Currently, the floods are in the headlines in all the newspapers. There has been a loss of life and property. Public money worth billions and trillions of rupees is wasted by the Government in floods control measures. The Government has not as yet formulated any plan to prevent the destruction caused by floods. The Government spends crores of rupees under Flood Relief Fund but the money spent by the Government so far to prevent floods is very less. In 1994-95 Government spent approxmimately 800 crore rupees under Relief Fund whereas it spent only 320 crore rupees to prevent floods. If the money given by the Government to the people under Flood Relief Fund is spent beforehand to prevent floods, the loss of life, property and live stock could be saved. The Agriculture Minister is present here. Through you I would like to make a submission to him especially because he is the leader of the farmers and the poor and belongs to the Communist Party as well. The present United Front Government comprises various ideologies. It has got the support of the Communist Party, Samajwadi Party and the Congress Party. Ever since this Government has been formed, the people of the country especially the poor, the backward classes and the farmers have many expectations from these parties. The poorer section of the people has expectations particularly from the Communist Party that with the formation of their Government, the poor will be looked after and arrangements will be made for safeguarding their lives and properties. Simply because the rich never suffer any losses in floods. Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, whenever there are floods, droughts or natural clamities, the loss is always borne by the poor. We have never heard of floods claiming the life of any leader or a capitalist. Whenever flood claims any life, it it that of a poor person, a poor farmer or a poor labourer. Their huts are wahsed away. We have never heard of palatial buildings being wahsed away. Hence these people have high expectations from the present Government that it will formulate plans to prevent the loss of lives and property of the poor in the event of floods in future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, so far as the causes of floods are concerned most of the floods are caused when either the dams give way or develop breaches or sometimes when there is an overflow because of excess rain and the water collected therein is released in the already swollen rivers. The Government spends a lot of money on construction of big dams which go on to because the cause of floods and thereby destruction. It causes death of the poor and loss of life, property and livestock. If the money presently being spent on construction of big dams is utilised by the Government to construct small dams, check dams and if rain water is conserved in the fields and villages itself, the floods can be prevented. But the Government is least concerned about protecting the poor, it is more concerned about the protection of the rich. All the plans are formulated to ensure the safety of the rich. If the rivers passing through the metropolitan cities are flooded, a lot of money is spent. In Delhi, 'pucca' embankments have been constructed alongside Yamuna. One never witnesses a flood of such magnitude which would claim lives or property because VIPs and rich reside in big cities. The Government never worries about the villages where the poor, the farmers, the labourer live. Every year the villages are flooded and every year houses are destroyed there. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if a hut of poor person is destroyed that person alone knows about the effort that goes in rebuilding it.

'Varsh beet jaate hain ek ghar banane mein,
veh taras nahin khaate hein bastiyan jalaane mein.'

When the fury of floods is unleashed, the villages and the houses are washed away. Children spend their nights on trees. Only the vilagers are familiar with this pain. This time 52 percent members elected to the Parliament are farmers, that is why the farmers and the labourers expect a lot from this Lok Sabha. They expect that the plans formulated by the Government will be in favour of the famers and the poor labourers.

Through you I would like to make a suggestion that the money spent by the Government to prevent the flood, to give compensation and to distribute relief amount should instead be spent on the construction of small check dams. Reservoirs should be dug up in villages so that the water is conserved in villages itself. Check dams should be constructed on small rivulets in villages so as to retain the water in the canals itself which could then be used for irrigation. This will be beneficial in two ways. After the rains, the water could be used for irrigational purposes. Slowly that water would be released in the fields which would help irrigate our land and it would also check the flow of water in already swollen rivers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to tell the Government that during the year 1994-95 a total of 54,535 cattle herds perished and 2038 people lost their lives in floods. Those killed were the poor farmers, labourers. Not a single child of the rich died. The biggest loss was suffered in Gujarat where 345 lives were lost. In U.P. floods claimed 317 lives. Throughout the country 92900 houses were damaged or wahsed away because of floods. All these houses belonged to the poor farm labourers. Apart from this, standing crops on 41.77 lakh hectares area were destroyed. About 2 crore 35 thousand peole and 72,941 villages were affected because of floods. The loss on account of floods is suffered not once in a while but every year.

When we have to bear losses every year because of floods why the Government has not formulated any plans as yet to check this destruction, to save the poor farmers and labourers and to prevent their losses. Perhaps it is because all of us who are sitting here forget the miseries of farmers and the poor. We care for their problems only when we are outside the Parliament but once we enter the Parliament, we forget everything about their problems. Here we are surrounded by urban people, the flatterers who flatter us for their own selfish ends and then we tend to remember their problems only. During the Parliamentary debates, a lot of time is wasted on such issues which are meaningless. Such a subject has never came up for serious discussion in Parliament.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please come to the point.

SHRI GANGA CHARAN RAJPUT : Yes Sir, I am aware of the time constraint.

I would like to request the Agriculture Minister because Shri Chaturanan Mishra is known as a prominent leader of the farmers and the farmers have a lot of expectations from him, Hence I suggest that the allocation made by the Government to prevent the floods should be utilised to formulate such plans which could prevent floods so that it might not become recurring phenomenon. If that is done, the poor farm labourers can be saved; water can be conserved in fields and in villages; small dams can be constructed. Instead of spending money on relief operations under flood Relief Fund, if the Government spends crores of rupees to prevent floods, the destruction caused by the floods every year would be checked. With these words, I conclude. Thank you.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I should also be given the opportunity to speak.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Is your name included in the list given to me by your party?

SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN (Alleppey) : Sir, Kerala is very severely hit by the recent heavy rains, floods and sea erosion. Agricultural crops, houses, roads and public properties were damaged very heavily and many kilometres of the sea coast was very much eroded. As Shri V.V. Raghavan said, 32 persons died due to the recent natural calamities. Sir, with the advent of the South West Monsoon wind, the sea coast of Kerala is subject to severe erosion resulting in a considerable loss of property, residential buildings, dislocation of life of lakhs of population, especially fishermen. The sea erosion is a special problem which has to be attended to very immediately.

In Kerala, every year, we are experiencing this problem. The people of the entire sea coast have suffered. This has been a major problem during the season in which most of the sea coast area, including my constituency Alleppey and other district Quilon, Trichur, Calicut, Kasergode, Enakulam are bodly affected. A major portion of the sea coast is very much affected very badly by the sea erosion. So, in this connection, considering all these points...*(Interruptions)*

COL. RAO RAM SINGH (Mahendergarh) : There is no Minister in the House. At least, one Cabinet rank Minister should be present in the House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri Balwant Singh Ramoowalia is here.

COL. RAO RAM SINGH : I am very sorry ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI V.M. SUDHEERAN : This is a very serious situation which has to be attended to with utmost priority and care. In this connection, I would urge upon the Central Government to review the existing guidelines relief operations.

As I share the sentiments expressed by many of my friends. We discuss the drought and flood; and this has become a routine affair. Instead of adopting a routine method, we have to evolve a permanent practical method and strategy to tackle this problem. There were many expert views expressed so far and many conferences held at the international level and at the national level but taking into consideration all the recommendations of these conferences - I do not want to go into all the recommendations - and expert views and practical experience, a clear-cut approach and strategy have to be evolved with a practical sense. I would urge upon the Government to refix the norms for the relief operations.

Sir, the Government of India, according to my information, has fixed Rs. 20,000 ex gratia for the dependents of the deceased people. Recently the hon. Prime Minister has sanctioned Rs. 50,000 from the National Relief Fund to the dependents of the deceased. But that is the kindness and the gracefulness of the Prime Minister.

I would request the hon. Minister, as part of assistance, the Central Government should sanction Rs. 1 lakh to the dependents of the deceased due to natural calamities. This should be made mandatory. Otherwise we cannot satisfy the dependents of the deceased, at least, to certain extent.

I would like to invite the kind attention of the Government that the norms fixed for other areas have to be reviewed. Fro example, according to the existing norms, the Government fo India had fixed Rs. 4000 as assistance to be given in case a house is damaged fully damaged due to a natural calamity. Is it posible to reconstruct a house with Rs. 4000?

I would like to invite the kind attention of the hon. Minister that the assitance given to small and marginal farmers is restricted to 25 per cent and 32 per cent respectively subject to a ceiling of Rs. 2500 per hectare. The poor farmers are not in a position to meet the expensses for further cultivation and all that. So, this has to be reviewed.

So, my first appeal to the hon. Minister is that to have a fresh look should on this issue and to have a practical view as far as the relief operations are concerned.

I would request the Government to have a very serious view also on the issue of sea erosion. This has been the major problem as far as Kerala is concerned. Now, the Government of Kerala is not in a position to meet the huge expenditure being incurred for constructing sea-walls and reform the existing sea-walls. Now, the Government of Kerala has submitted a comprehensive proposal to the Central Government regarding construction of sea-walls. This estimate of the comprehensive proposal is about Rs. 403.66 crore. I request the Government to have a serious view of the proposal and clear it. Financial assitance to the Government of Kerala for constructing sea-walls and for re-froming the existing sea walls may sanctioned. Till 1992 the Central Government was sanctioning loans for this purpose but that was discontinued from 1991-92. So, this aspect has to be taken into consideration and the proposals submitted by the Government of Kerala has to be scantioned. Outherwise the Government of Kerala. will not be in a position to construct see-walls as required. During monsoon period. there were instances of sea erosion. In one of my Panchayats, namely Arathipuzha, kilometres of land have been taken over by sea. I would request the hon. Minister of Agriculture to have on the spot study to see the gravity of the problem of sea erosion in Kerala. When Mr. Barnala was the Agriculture Minister, he had been to Kerala to see the gravity of the sea erosion and he sanctioned a substantial amount for construction of sea walls.

Sir, it is a major issue and this issue has to be taken very seriously to save Kerala, to save the fisherfolk, to save the people, the entire population on the sea coast. Otherwise they will be put into utter miseries. Their lives are very much miserable. So, considering these aspects the Government of India has to take a very lenient view and financial assistance has to be provided immediately.

I request the hon. Minister to convene a conference of Members of Parliament from Kerala in the presence of the representatives of Government of Kerala to have a detailed discussion about the question of sea-erosion and other areas of natural calamities. I think, that will be helpful in having better understanding of the problems. The people of Kerala have to be saved immediately; the sea coast has to be protected immediately, otherwise in every season heactares of land is being eroded into sea. This is a very serious problem and we have to take adhoc and long term measures. We have to take preventive steps immediately.

So, I urge upon the Government to have a very serious view on this.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Ten more Members wish to speak on this subject. If each member concludes in five to seven minutes, everyone can get a chance to speak.

[English]

PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS (Jalpaiguri) : Thank you, Sir. We are very much unfortunate that every year during this June-July Session, we, the Members of Parliament have to discuss this issue, i.e. the floods and drought issue. You know the floods and drought issue has become an annual feature in our country. Floods are among the most disruptive acts of nature. Severe floods occur every year in one or the other part of the country causing tremendous damage. loss of life, large scale damage of property and untold miseries of the millions and millions of people.

Out of the countries total geographical area - 328 million hectares - 40 million hectares has been assessed to be the flood prone area. Out of this, 32 million hectares has been assessed to be protectable and only eight million hectare area has been affected by floods every year by rotation during this monsoon season. The crops area affected per year is about 3.5 million hectares. The total number of lives lost annually due to floods is about 1.439 and the property lost due to floods, in money value, is about Rs. 900 crore.

It is no doubt a very serious and alarming news. Sir, as per this yea's statistics, out of 32 States and Union Territories, 16 States are flood affected and the crops area damaged in these 16 States are more than 2.4 lakh hectares; the lives lost are more than 750; houses damaged are more than three lakhs and cattle heads lost are more than 14,000.

I would like to state the State-wise damage figures, which can easily reveal how the magnitude of the damage is. In Andhra Pradeh, there were 52 deaths; 6, 096 hectares had been affected and 3,421 families had been affected. In Assam, there were 22 deaths; 25 tea estates had been affected and 3.57 lakh persons had been affected. In Gujarat, there were 24 deaths and 3,226 persons had been affected. In Jammu and Kashmir- I do not have the death record four lakh persons had been affected. In Karnataka, there were 14 deaths: Rs. 5.84 crore worth of properties had been damaged. In Kerala, 3,100 hectares had been affected. In Maharashtra, there were 34 deaths. In Rajasthan there were 86 deaths; Rs. 300 crore worth of property had been damaged and 7.600 persons had been affected. InTamil Nadu, there were 31 deaths and 3,526 persons had been affected. In Tripura, there were seven deaths and 163 families had been affected. In Punjab, there were 16 deaths and 4,200 persons had been affected. In West Bengal, there were 51 deaths specially in North Bengal and four lakh people had been affected.

The relief work by the State Government has been going on perfectly in all the States. I am very much thankful to the State Government for this.

The Central Government had been kind enough to react properly in time and had released already two instalments out of the Calamity Relief Fund to the State. But, Sir, this amount is not adequate; this fund is not adequate to meet the crisis of this type of high magnitude. So, I request the Government to increase the amount in this regard so that the State Government be able to meet the crisis easily.

Providing relief to the victims is not the only solution. The Government should come forward with a comprehensive programme and a scheme to control the flood disaster.

What is the statistics? Out of 40 million hectares of flood-prone area, as I have stated already, about 32 million hectares have been taken to be flood protective. This is due to the continuous efforts of the Central and the State Governments. I would urge upon the Government to go on with this effort so that the flood protected area may be increased.

Since the natural disaster cannot be protected fully, the Government should make efforts towards strengthening; improving our capacity to confront the disaster; assuring of speedy relief and restoration of roads, communication, power and irrigation within the shortest possible time.

In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that during 1993 floods, in Jalpaiguri, West Bengal so many bridges on the National Highway No.31 and the Nation Highway itself had been damaged. The construction of these bridges and repairing of these roads are yet to be done. My colleague, Shri R.B. Roy, had visited the recently flood affected area. The bridges and the Road 41 had been damaged again and the irrigation system of the area had totally been affected. So, I urge upon the Central Government to give a special notice to this by releasing adequate funds to state so that all these may be restored at an early date. There is a National Advisory Committee under the leadership of the Minister of Agriculture of the Central Government. I do not know what this Committee is doing. I would request the Government to look into it so that the Committee may be more serious.

I would like to table some suggestions in this regard so that the flood and drought may be controlled permanently. It is essential to increase the share of the Centre in the fund meant for the States. There is a need for an indepth analysis of national efforts, there is a need for a thorough survey of the affected areas, there is also a need to promote greater public awareness and to launch specific initiatives, there is a need to have a comprehensive planning of flood control in the lower Ganges and the Brahmaputra Basins and its execution, and there is a need to draw up and implement a comprehensive plan of action to mitigate the efforts of the national disaster.

Such programmes have to be taken up immediately for defeating the spate of rivers and oceans because the depth of rivers and oceans is decreasing continuously due to siltation of the land. It is also suggested to build up an adequate number of reservoirs on the rivers flowing out from Arunachal Pradesh to the Brahmaputra. This will not only control the flood of the area but will also facilitate the hydel power potential.

The last suggestion that I would like to make is that a Ministry of Department must be created in the Central Government and also in the State Governments for involving themselves in an integrated disaster reduction management scheme on a continuous basis to deal with all the aspects of such national calamities.

DR. JAYANTA RONGPI (Autonomous District-Assam) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will be very brief and I shall not repeat what many of the hon. Members have already pointed out and with which I also associate myself.

I have gone through the debates of the last few Lok Sabhas, namely the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Lok Sabhas. I have found that in every monsoon season, there is invariably a discussion on flood and drought situation. We have been going through almost a monotonous and routine ritual, repeating it every year.

When the flood comes, the Ministers hover around in aeroplanes or helicopters assessing floods. The MPs shout for funds for their respective States and constituencies and the Minister comes out with the usual reply that they were waiting for the memorandum from the State Government. If the memorandum comes, they would give the funds or he says that there is a shortage of funds.

This ritual has been going on for the last so many decades. Therefore, my request is tha it is high and long enough time with four or five decades already gone, that we definitely reviewed our flood and drought tackling mechanism. The flood and drought management mechanism demands a very thorough review.

Many of the hon. Members have already point out so many things. I also agree with many of the points that they have raised. I would like to say that in our vast country, we are faced with flood and also a drought situation.

18.00 hrs.

The need of the hour is a very scientific and comprehensive management of our water resources. We should go into the depth of the problem. I urge upon the government that they should review their own mechanism of facing this situation. I hope that they will go into the depth of the problem.

My advice is - such advices have come from other hon. Members also - that many programmes and decisions are pending and they should take a decision on those issues like the linkage of the rivers of North India and South India. One of the reasons for floods is the massive deforestation in the upper stream of the river sources. Therefore, afforestation schemes in the upper courses of the major rivers is also a must. Similarly, desilting of the major rivers and also building of the reservoirs are important.

An hon. Member from Punjab or from the other side has suggested that dams should be constructed in the villages. I also suggest that in the upper courses of the river, where it is eco-friendly, where it does not attract environmental disaster, big reservoirs should be constructed so that monsoon water can be kept and it does not create floods. During the drought time or lean time this reservoir can be opened and water can be utilised for irrigation. So, all these things require an inter-Ministerial coordination. Through only one Ministry—Ministry of Agriculture or Ministry of Food—this situation will not be addressed to. Therefore, my suggestion is that an inter-Ministerial coordination Committee or an apex body should be set up which can coordinate with the various departments. So, water resources management and an inter-Ministerial coordination is a must to tackle the problem seriously.

So far as floods and droughts are concerned, science has developed to a great extent. Even this morning, the hon. Minister has said as to how the space technology and satelllite system have developed. So, they should be properly utilised even in the management of floods especially in the early projection of the flood situation. Now, a fairly accurate method has been evolved in many countries. Our country is also not lagging behind. So, proper utilisation of the satellite pictures is necessary.

Now, monsoon prediction is fairly accurate. This should be properly utilised. At the same time, in many developed countries they have developed the computerised flood simulator methods. We can also adopt that method and by putting the monsoon prediction data we can predict the floods, sometimes months before or definitely, two or three weeks before. We can predict that there may be floods in such and such river basins.

Therefore, the Ministry should take the help of those scientific devices which are available now so that an early signal can be given to the respective States or even the Government can prepare itself for the impending floods and take measures thereof. Apart from that a comprehensive approach should taken.

Sir, I hail from a very flood prone area of Assam. I hope that some amount from the National Calamity Relief Fund would definitely go to Assam and there is no doubt about it. The Government has taken a decision and the hon. Minister has replied that the Finance Commission has also fixed some norms for release of money from the National Calamity Refief Fund.

So, in this particular regard I would like to draw the attention of the Government through you that in the State of Assam the fury of flood is a very rare severity, specially this year. All people are saying that this is the severest flood since 1950.

Sir, I am not aware of the norms fixed by the Planning Commission or the Finance Commission. The norms should not come as an obstacle in giving proper flood relief to the people of Assam. Therefore, I request that if necessary, these norms should be modified or amended. Otherwise a backward State like Assam is just not in a position to face the situation where the fury of flood is unprecedented.

With these words I again draw the attention of the Government to the situation in Assam and I hope that this new Government will take necessary steps to face the situation in earnest manner.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (Chhapra) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, today. the august House is holding a discussion on flood and natural calamity with reference to the question of 10th July. I was listening to the views of the hon. Members. Today the fury of flood has reached everywhere. While some regions in the country are experiencing famine other regions are reeling under cyclone and tornado.

Sir, when a State or a country faces war, it goes back 20-25 years but when a country experiences flood like this continuously it goes back every year. I want to draw your attention toward this thing because the fury of flood is speading every nook and corner of the country. When we were young and studying in schools, we knew that Rajasthan is a desert area. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar came under the eastern region where there is a network of rivers. We, therefore, thought that these regions experienced fury of flood, During my childhood, I read that Rajasthan is a sandy area but due to some atmospheric changes we see floods in Rajasthan also. we also see flood occuring in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. It is nothing new that floods occur in Bihar but we do not come across examples in the history of Rajasthan that desert areas like Rajasthan are experiencing flood and the same situation is seen in the whole country. Sir, we are not going into the basic issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, all the hon. Members are expressing their views on this subject except Mr. Rongpi who has drawn the attention of the Government towards exploitation of the environment. We raise the question of flood and famine and the Centre always decides that an amount of Rs. Seven crore will be given to natural calamity fund to help the affected States. Every year this question will be raised in the House during the monsoon session.

And the process of some States having its large share and the other the smaller share will continue. Sir, this issue does not end here. The hon. Minister has stated that 13 districts and 11 thousand villages and one and a half crore people are affected by flood. 641 persons and more than 13 thousand heads of cattle died.

Sir, through you, I would like to ask the hon. Members of the House and the hon. Minister about the question raised by Mr. Rongpi. The mountain range of Bihar, U.P. and West Bengal are connected with the Himalayas. I had put a question to the Ministry of Environment and forests, the replies of which has since been received by me. The question pertains to 17th July. In the course of discussion on the said question I had pointed out that due to illegal tree falling in Nepal the catchment area is getting reduced and whenever there is rain in the hilly region floods occur in the low lying areas of the rivers of Bihar, U.P. and West Bengal. The flood waters carry large quantities of sand and siltation takes place in these rivers.

Thus the level of river water rises. I get the answer to my yesterday's question. I have got a very old newspaper clipping in which the reply given by former hon. Minister Mr. Kalpnath Rai to the question raised by Shrimati Kamala Sinha has been publised. The question was related to Bihar. He admitted that due to continuous falling of trees on in the hilly areas of Bihar adjoining Nepal quantum of siltation is more in Bihar. As such the fury of flood is more severe in the border areas of Bihar and U.P. But the Central Government in its answer to the second question stated that no such siltation has taken place in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. I would like to know from the Government as to what type of understanding has been made to run the country. One year they say that siltation has taken place and the other year in reply to the question of hon. Member they say that there is no such siltation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, ecological balance is being disturbed for the last 50 years. In Asian countries the quantum of siltation is 30 times more than those in European countries. It is because of falling of trees in hilly regions and other areas is going on continuously on for the last 50 years and the siltation is rapidly increasing. That is why severe flood situation has been created throughout the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the whole country is proceeding on the path of development. Construction work of big lakes and dams is going on with the construction of lakes the contours of Indian Geography is getting disturbed. This disturbs the natural pace of water leakage. It is causing a lot of problems. The old people dealing with the irrigation have not given due importance to the environment and drainage system. At present, there is 7 million hectare irrigated land in the country and out of that 2 million hectare land is affected by salanity or water logging. The people who had been entrusted with the responsibility of running the country by developing a proper system after independence, have made a mockery of the entire system. Big projects were planned in the name of development but these projects have marred the same development. Sir, when the Bhakhara dam was under construction, the whole country was discussing about its irrigation as well as electricity generating capacity but when the water level in 1988 increased two metres, the water had to be released under compulsion. As a result thereof Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Ambala cities were inundated. We had never dreamt of flood in Punjab. Even those, who had constructed the Bhakhra dam, had never thought as to what would they do when the water level increases. This havoc caused by floods is the result of lack of far sightedness.

I would like to read out a statement of Shri Sundar Lal Bahuguna which is the befitting remark on the entire system-

[English]

> "Dam is a short-term solution of a permanent problem and if constructed, big dams will stand as monuments of stupidity of 20th Century."

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this subject is important in itself. It indicates the flood, the exploitation of the environment and a mockery. I am not giving lecture on the environment. I would like a balanced integrated programme to be chalked out in this regard, so that the equilibrium in nature could be restablished which has been destroyed for the last 50 years. Earlier, the Ministry of Water Resources used to be known as the Ministry of Irrigation. Sir, it is a mockery of a country with so many rivers, in which one part experiences the flood and the other part suffers the drought. The Ministry of Water Resources has emerged as the Ministry of Water calamity in the entire country. We would have to consider as to where Government has been at fault in this regard. We talk of the famine. The famine and the rain are interlinked somewhere. For the balanced environment, there should be 32 per cent forest area on the earth but at present there is only 12 to 14 per cent forest area in India whereas it is 12 to 13 per cent as per the report of the National Remote Sensing. The quantum of rainfall falls down in the area where the number of trees will be less. Today, the level of ground water is decreasing. I would like to explain it with an example. Hon. Member of Parliament Shri Nitish Kumar represents Nalanda Parliamentary Constituency where the level of ground water has come down to an alarming point. Though development took place but the tube wells were set up in an unscientific way resulting in decrease in the ground water level. If this decrease continues. one day that area will automatically become a dry area. We will have to set up a sequence between Science and environment at some point otherwise we would be bound to spend thousands of crores of rupees in place of Rs. 700 crore on preventive measures. Even after such a long time of independence. we could not solve this problem and it seems that we will remain entangled in the same eproblem in future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sir, four lakh tonnes of polythene bags are being dumped in our country while it is out of use in other countries but we are using it and throwing away the used one on the ground. The water-absorbing capacity of the earth is decreasing due to it. It is a Scientific subject in itself. The Government should pay its attention as to why the water level is decreasing and also to the drought conditions? (*English*) Science has to be integrated with development. (*Translation*) We have to think over it. I would like to present before you some data to prove as to how the developmental works done during the last 50 years have generated problems. In 1953, the flood affected area was 22 lakh hectare which increased to 90 lakh hectare in 1996. Likewise, the number of flood affected people was two crore and forty-two lakh in the year 1953 which increased to the 4 crore and 83 lakh in 1996. In the same way, the death rate was 42 per annum which has now increased up to 2000 per annum. Likewise, the loss of property was Rs.60 crore which has increased to Rs. 2000 crore in 1995. I would like to ask the Government as to how has it fixed Rs. 700 crore for natural calamities? On what basis it has been fixed? You know that Rs. 2000 crore have been provided for this purpose in your report, then how far Rs. 700 crore will suffice? You have spent Rs. 30 thousand crore on the flood and natural calamities during the last 50 years.

Sir, in the end, I would like to state that the drought prevention and flood relief is not a solution in itself. We will have to think over it and the hon. Minister will have to pay his attention towards this problem. We will have to consult the Ministry of Irrigation. The departments of environment and Science and technology have made much progress. In these circumstances, the work cannot be done solely. I have the report in which it has been stated that National Flood Commission had made its recommendations.

[English]

SHRI XAVIER ARAKAL (Ernakulam) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, he is taking too much time. The Chair has decided to give five minutes only to each hon. Member.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It seems that I have to be more strict now. Mr. Rudi, please conclude now.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES (Udupi) : Mr. Chairman. Sir. he is making good points. He should be allowed to speak for some more time.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Mr. Deputy Chairman. Sir. this decision was taken in a conference on flood control held in South in 1971. At that time the subjects of Environment were not so important. It was discussed as to how the flood could be controlled but the environment was not taken into consideration. National Flood Commission was set up in 1991. Unfortunately, when I went through the report. I found that it also contained only flood control measures as to how the protection from the flood can be made effective. flood warning can be made but this aspect could not be associated with the environment for the last thirty years. I would like to ask the hon. Minister who himself hails from Bihar to provide Bihar Rs. 700 crore or Rs. 7000 crore for this purpose. I do not know as to how much money will the Central Government provide but Bihar Government was also to give 25 per cent of the total amount. It had neither funds with it. nor has ever been in a position to provide the funds. But if Bihar has to be saved from the devastation of the flood, the people of Bihar are to be helped and if you have sympathy for the people of Bihar. any such programme should be prepared by which the hon. Minister, instead of providing money to the Government of Bihar, should initiate the relief work at his own.

I, once again, urge upon the Government to take this matter seriously and announce the national flood policy by establishing a proper coordination. The subjects connected with the environment should also be covered.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri Subbarami Reddy.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) : You did not invite any hon. Member from the Janata Dal.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The next speaker is from the Janata Dal.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : You did not give time to any Member from our party. Our party has been alloted much time.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Your party has sent the names of the Speakers very late.

(Interruptions)

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Visakhapatnam) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, till now a number of hon. Members belonging to various parts of the country and belonging to various political parties have been speaking. So many Members have been talking unanimously that our country has been suffering from the devastation of floods and cyclones every year and that what is the solution and salvation for this nation. I do not want to repeat that. We do know that thousands of people have been dying every year and properties worth thousands and crores of rupees are washed every year due to floods. This devastation is going on for the last so many years. We have got only one Minister, hon. Minister of Agriculture present. Strictly speaking, this subject is so important for the nation that majority of the Cabinet must be present and should hear what is being spoken.

[Translation]

What we are talking about is not useless.

[English]

Everybody irrespective of political affiliations- is talking with one voice how to prevent the floods and how to control the cyclones. It is everybody's concern and anxiety...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

It is not the department of just one hon. Minister but of several hon. Ministers. It is a very important subject.

[English]

Therefore, my request is that the Government must have determination, the Government must have devotion and the Government must have concentration to solve this problem.

[Translation]

Making, hearing or writing speeches and having details of it the next day is of no use.

[English]

I would say nothing is impossible if money is there. We can solve this problem by using funds. There are so many schemes. Somebody is asking for canal and somebody is asking for the linkage of Ganga and Cauvery. Frankly speaking, we need money. So, when we are giving the Budget.

[Translation]

We give preference to other scheme but forget the flood control.

[English]

Therefore, I appeal to the Government and particularly to the Prime Minister that they must give top priority to this subject and while preparing the Budget some money should be provided for undertaking permanent measures for controlling floods and cyclones. I hope every Member accepts this and it must be supported in one voice.

There should be no discrimination between one State and another. Of course, as far as I am concerned, I will naturally say that my State, Andhra Pradesh, is suffering. It is next to Assam. Andhra Pradesh has been hit on one side by South-East monsoon and, on the other side, the South-West monsoon. In fact, devastations have taken place. Last October, lakhs of acres have been washed away. Hundreds of people died. The same devastation repeated itsalf in June. If you take the history of Andhra Pradesh for the last 25 years, in every year, majority of districts have been hit by floods and cyclones. We get tears of sympathy to think how poor people have been thrown out without accommondation.

[Translation]

They do not have anything to eat or drink and accommodation to live in and the extreme sorrow we feel at their sad plight, need not be expressed in words.

[English]

Therefore, my humble request is, besides merely speaking under Rule 193, let us take a determined decision that the Government must give top most priority to this problem. Money is available.

[Translation]

I would like to disclose a secret which no other speaker has done so far.

[English]

The World Bank will give the money. I will tell you how it will give money. When Dr. Chenna Reddy who was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and who is now the Governor of Tamil Nadu, happended to go to the United States for some treatment, he met the World Bank Vice-President and inspired him and got thousands of crores of rupees for the cyclone affected areas of Andhra Pradesh in nineties. Therefore, now the Government of India must take up with the World Bank, ADB and all other institutions and get funds and make this country more prosperous. Poor people should not be allowed to die like this. It is a great opportunity for us to approach the World Bank and other institutions.

The hands of the hon. Minister of Agriculture and of the Minister of Welfare must be strengthened. Social welfare means not only the development of sports but also youth affairs and welfare of woman and children.

[Translation]

Attention should be paid on every one's welfare and not only on the welfare of youth sports, ladies or men. You should provide more powers, more secretaries and more money.

[English]

We hope that the Government will be inspired and stimulated and they will take a sterling decision to solve this problem permanently. We are going to enter into the 21st century just in a few years. We can tell the world that India is a great country which has taken such permanent measures to solve the problem of floods and cyclones. You must see that the lives of poor people are saved.

I once again hope that the Government will give topmost priority to solve this problem.

[Translation]

Insufficient funds have been provided to Andhra Pradesh.

[English]

The State of Andhra Pradesh sustained a loss of Rs. 200 crore due to floods and cyclones in June and only Rs. 43 crore is given by the Central Government. I request that much more money should be given to Andhra Pradesh. The support should be given not only to Andhra Pradesh but also to Assam.

The State of Andhra Pradesh sustained a loss of Rs. 600 crore last October due to floods. The Central Government sanctioned only Rs. 83 crore. We have to do with it.

[Translation]

Bihar has also been provided with insufficient funds.

[English]

I once again thank you very much.

[Translation]

SHRI ANIL KUMAR YADAV (Khagariya) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, You have provided me an opportunity to deliver my maiden speech. I express my gratitude and want to say that the Parliamentary constituency which I represent is a flood prone area though the north Bihar is the most flood affected area of the country. Bihar suffers every year 40 percent of the total devastation of flood in the whole country because the north Bihar is mostly devasted by the rivers flowing from Nepal like Gandak, Bagmati, Kosi, Kamala etc. Besides Ganga, Sone and Punpun rivers also cause serious floods which damages the crops of the farmers, the houses of the poor, roads and claims lives and livestock every year. The flood in the last year claimed 70 lives in Banka and Bhagalpur. The flood in Ganga, Bagmati and Kosi revers in my Parliamentary constituency is causing soil erosion. The soil erosion in Koragaon in Khagariya and in villages in Parwatshah has taken an alarming shape.

I, therefore, urge upon the Central Government to sign a treaty with Nepal for flood control and take upon itself full responsibility of it.

The Committee on National calamity fund had sanctioned Rs. 29 crore for relief works in 1995-96 but if has not been released so far. I urge upon the Central Government to release this fund immediately.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rs. 49 crore had been sanctioned to Bihar for relief works and to face the natural calamities. I demand that this amount should be increased to Rs. 100 crore.

[English]

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (Lakhimpur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is my maiden speech. So, please bear with me for my presentation.

Sir, we have already discussed this matter for nearly two hours. It has been felt by most of the hon. Members that even after fifty years of our Independence, we are talking in terms of only certain temporary measures for the solution of the flood problem now being faced by the different States of this country. Before twenty years, flood was a problem for the States of Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and some parts of South India only. But, after a lapse of time, when the desert area of Rajasthan has become flood-prone, it has drawn the attention of the entire country. Now, almost the entire country has been suffering from this problem. There is the possibility that the problem will come and go. But it is very hard that we could find a solution with the existing pattern of Democracy. I must justify myself in saying this and draw the attention of the House that the Central Government is always having an escapist attitude while such problem arises in any State of this country. The Central Government says that it is the liability of the State Government to look after the relief and rehabilitation work.

I will now cite an example. While there was the six-year foreigners' movement in Assam there was a feeling that the property, the assets of Assam were the assets of the country but the problem of Assam was not the problem of the country. Similarly, now every State has been compelled to do the relief and rehabilitation work by itself and the grants to the States are given as loan. According to the Central Government, it is not the responsibility of the Central Government to manage the affected people, the flood damages or any other damages caused by the natural calamities. That is why, some of the hon. Members have raised this point. Of course, the Finance Commission has formulated certain norms how the States will be provided with money. It is given as advance. There is a definit amount like Rs. 20 crore or Rs. 30 crore given as per the population of the State. It is a fixed amount. But with that meagre amount, no permanent solution can be found to the flood problem in any of the State. That is why, with the existing pattern or Democracy, we do not believe that there can be any permanent solution. So, I must emphasise that there should be proper review of the Centre-State relations. If the problems are to be tackled by the State Government, the States should be given more autonomy for resource mobilisation so that can solve their problems by themselves. If necessary, the State Governments will have some foreign collaboration to bring money. For example, in Assam, the Brahmaputra Board was constituted by an Act of Parliament in 1981 which is just an eye-wash to the people.

Since then, at least ten investigation work on ten rivers was done by investing at least Rs. 300 crore. But not a single project has been implemented till today. The magnitude of the flood problem in the entire country is going high and high every day. The river bed has been rising day by day because of the silt material carried from the catchment area. Due to deforestation, silt materials are accumulated on the river beds and the river beds are rising day by day. In 1985, on certain points, the lavel of river Brahmaputra in Assam was compared to the level that prevailed in 1952. In 1985, the level of the river beds came up to five metres from the depth that was in 1952. Now in certain areas, the river bed of Brahmaputra is equal to the ground level of the other areas. So, definitely there is no river at all. There is a big area where the river flows in different directions. This is the phenomenon in all the rivers of Assam because the rivers in Assam start from the neighbouring hilly areas. They bring a lot of silt material which gets accumulated. So, the magnitude of flood has been going high and high each time after 1952. This flood is of the highest magnitude after 1962. There is no river whose water is not coming from the hilly areas thus washing away the entire area. The number of embankments which were constructed on the rivers Brahmaputra, Subansari and Barak since 1952, all have since been washed away and almost all the area has been inundated, even the town area. In my constituency, there are nine legislative assembly segments where 90 per cent of the area is submarged. The greatest river island of the world is situated in my constituency which is called Majuli. Two-thirds of that island are already washed away and only one-third of that island if left. While the river beds rise, erosion is caused to the neighbouring areas. Thereby, in Assam, 40 per cent of the total cultivable area under the tea gardens and out of the remaining area, 80 per cent is a flood-prone area. Now every year because of the devastating floods, the cultivable area is always inundated. Thus peasants cannot go for cultivation, during statement.

The flood situation in Assam is different from the flood situation prevailing in other States like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan or Punjab. It is a recurring phenomenon. In one year, we have a minimum of five and the maximum of 15 floods. So from the month of April till the end of October flood is there. Cultivators cannot go for raising their crops. Ultimately, the entire economy suffers. These are the reasons as to why the State of Assam has been facing a lot of economic problem. The insurgency problem is also coming because the entire economy is at stake. Now, therefore, these outlawed orginisations have thought that if they are within India, there is no solution to the problem. For any such problem, negotiations have taken place, accords are signed but afterwards these problems are not solved. Likewise, the Brahmaputra Board was constituted which was an eye-wash to the people of Assam. That Board was constituted under an Act of Parliament. But nothing was done. Whenever there is any problem, say, the Cauvery River or the Narmada River problem, some committees are constituted but there will not be any solution. This piecemeal business is making the country suffer to a great extent. Now if we allow further time without taking any concrete measures, I think, this country's integrity will not be there. I urge upon the hon, Minister and also the Members of the House to take a serious view on this matter so that the problems of flood and other natural calamities can be dealt with.

I have a suggestion. I want to draw the attention of the House and also the hon. Minister for Agriculture to the fact that the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed that the decade starting from 1990 is the Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction to reduce through concerted international actions the loss of life, damage to property and social and economic disruption in the world, especially in the developing countries. Probably the hon. Minister for Agriculture would be able to enlighten us about the steps taken in this regard. Since the international organisation is coming forward, we must explore the possibility of bringing some funds to correct the ecological imbalance through devastation caused by floods and for the rehabilitation of the affacted people.

Lastly I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister for Agriculture to the fact that in my constituency, seven sub divisions namely Dhakua Khana, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Jonai, Sadia, Majoli, Chabua (Dibrugarh) and parts of Arunachal Pradesh, are under water and most of the places are cut off from the rest of the country for the last 20 days. The road communication in most of these parts has also been affected. There is hardly any space even for the purpose of opening relief camps because the entire area is inundated. In such a situation the Government of India should take appropriate steps for restoring the road communication and for providing relief and rehabilitation on a war footing.

With these remarks, I conclude my speech.

SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN (Quilon) : Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I am not taking much time of the House because almost all the hon. Members have already desribed the flood situation. The natural calamities and the safety measures to be taken. I am just here to supplement and support the hon. Members who have already described the flood situation in Kerala.

It is well known to us that the flood and the drought in earlier years were incidental ones. Once in two, three or five years they used to occur. But now the natural calamity has become a regular feature in our country. So this House has to consider how it can be prevented in a permanent way, what are the safety measures to be taken to prevent it permanently.

This can be classified in two ways, firstly the natural calamities which can be prevented by human beings, which are in our control; and secondly those which cannot be prevented, for example, cyclones. In such a case we can only take welfare measures and some reliefs can be given. In the case of those which can be prevented the main thing which I would highlight before this House is specially in regard to the State of Kerala. The problems caused due to sea erosion in our State have already been submitted before this House. Sea erosion is a grave problem in Kerala. The carving of sea shores from Trivandrum to Kasargod is taking the life and property of several persons. Even schools and temples have been taken by the sea erosion. A cruel damage has been caused to the State of Kerala by the sea erosion. My submission is, it is a national boundary in the State. I think that it is the bounden duty of the Central Government to protect the national boundary. Since sea shore is a national boundary, it is the bounden duty of the Government of India to protect this national boundary. Urgennt measures have to be taken to protect the sea shore. The only permanent measure which can be taken is to construct sea walls and to regularly maintain them.

18.44 hrs.

(Shri Nitish Kumar *in the Chair*)

We have got several experiences. Twenty years back sea walls were constructed; but no maintenance has been made and nothing has been done. Therefore my submission is only by constructing permanent sea walls and by regularly maintaining them we can prevent sea erosion and the damage caused due to sea erosion.

As regards the relief measures which have been taken, it has already been submitted here that they are very meagre and are not adequate. Award of Rs. 50,000 to the familiy of a dead person who was the bread-winner of the entire family is not sufficient now-a-days. So, the proposal of enhancing relief measures also may be taken into account.

As I have already submitted, in my constituency, there is a *Gram panchayat* There is a strip of land, which is a straight road running to eighteen kilometres. It is in a village called, 'Alappad'. On the western side, there is sea and on the eastern side there is backwater. This is a village having 30,000 strong population. One kilometre of the sea shore has already been grabbed by the sea. One temple has been lost; one school has been lost. If this trend continues, if it is not prevented and the sea shore is not protected, it is sure that the entire *panchayat* would go into the sea.

The next area which would be affected is the National Highway 47. NH-47 would be affected because the gap between the sea and the backwater is just 100 metres. Now, to protect the seashore is the main problem which has to be considered. I hope that the Ministry of Water Resources, in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture would plan certain schemes and we hope that the people of Kerala would prepare some schemes and those schemes would be submitted before the Government of India. My humble submission to the hon. Minister is to take necessary steps, approve the schemes and ensure that financial assistance is given to protect the seashore of Kerala.

Another submission of mine is that relief measures which have already been in existence, the norms which have been accepted by the Government and also by the Finance Commission should be reviewed and adequate compensation should be given.

With these words, I conclude my speach.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is true that the amount provided by way of expenditure on flood relief works, is not being utilised. Therefore, the present Government should think about it and chalk out a national policy for the prevention of flood. The public property damaged by the floods every year and heavy amount on relief and rescue works incurred by the State Government added together amount to double loss.

Sir, I want to make special mention of Rajasthan. Rajasthan has been inundated second year also though in the current year the State had experienced drought also. Bikaner a desert area has been inundated. Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Churu, Nagpur, Seekar, Alwar and Bharatpur i.e. eastern and western regions which are purely desert areas, are under the grip of flood. It is a strange situation. Bharatpur has also come under the grip of flood water which has flown down from Agra, Mathura and Haryana. Unfortunately, this national calamity has hit only Rajasthan.

Sir, Rajasthan at present has fallen in miserable condition. 1901 villages of Rajasthan have been affected by flood 81 thousand houses have been damaged, 43 people have been swept away by the flood water and around 97 persons have lost their lives. Public property worth thousand of rupees have been damaged. The hon. Prime Minister has announced a compensation of Rs. 50 thousand to each family of the deceased; it means that the criteria of compensation being provided to the family of a deceased is different i.e. if a person has lost his life in a rail accident or in an air crash the family of the deceased gets different amount as compensation. The criteria of providing compensation to the family of a person killed in riots is different. The family of each innocent people who lost their lives should be given Rs. 2 lakh as compensation and their dependent should be given jobs. I demand it from the Government of India specially the hon. Prime Minister who is not present in the House today. The day when the amount of compensation was announced to be Rs. fifty thousand. I felt very sorry that the cost of human life is merely Rs. fifty thousand. If anybody is ready to die for Rs. fifty thousand then I shall give him Rs. fifty one thousand....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is not by way of incentive.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Public property and private property as well as the drinking water supply system have been damaged there....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Bhargava ji, although you speak in brief still try to speak in very brief so that every one could get a chance to speak.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : I would now come to the salient features only. In Jaisalmer, 219 Willages and 10,815 houses have been damaged and 143 livestock have lost their lives. In this way five wards in Bikaner, 16 wards in Naukha and 110 villages of Bikaner have sufferred damage. The crop as well as 5253 houses have been damaged besides the loss of livestock and three lives. In the same way in Nagaur, 160 villages and 10 thousand houses were damaged and 25 persons lost their lives. In Jodhpur, 2000 livestock and 2 persons lost their lives besides 12 thousand houses were damaged. In Alwar, which comes in eastern Rajasthan. which is never affected by flood, 168 villages have been affected, 3000 houses have been damaged and 15 people have lost their lives. Even today, the situation of Alwar is grave. In Bharatpur. 776 villages have been damaged by the flood ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please come forward to give suggestions.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : I am just coming to that point. 35 thousand houses have been affected. 34 people lost their lives in Bharatpur....(*Interruptions*) The water flown down from Agra, Mathura and Haryana has inundated Bharatpur. Similarly damage has been caused in Nagpur also. Unfortunately the Sambhar lake the source of salt has been filled with the rain water as a result 15 thousand workers have been rendered jobless. You will not be able to get salt. Other people will have to take saltless diet like blood pressure patients do.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have not tasted the salt mentioned by you.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : You have tasted. It is Sambhar salt which is supplied to your kitchen. Our hon. Minister and the members of the Cabinet, all are using the same salt. Unfortunately, 25 thousand villages came in the grip of famine, last year. Entire amount of Rs. 300 crore with the State Government was spent and not a single paisa was left in the Calamity Relief Fund. What I mean to say is that we did not get the funds we needed.

Lastly, the last year, Hanumangarh, Alwar and Bhartpur were affected by famine as well as by the flood. The Government of Rajasthan had demanded Rs. 365 crore from the Union Government but the State Government was provided Rs. 21 crore and that too was not made available to it. I am aware of the scarcity of time as well as your difficulties. Alwar, Bharatpur, Jodhpur, Nagpur, and Jaisalmer, all are affected. Moti jheel is also affected. The State Government has made a further demand of Rs. 300 crore. The State Government needs Rs. 100 crore urgently and the remaining Rs. 200 crore after some time. It had demanded Rs. 365 crore earlier out of which Rs. 21 crore were to be provided but this amount also could not be made available. Therefore, the State Government should be provided Rs. 300 crore—the balance of last year, Rs. 100 crore immediately and Rs. 200 crore after 4-5 days. It should not be provided only Rs. 21 crore but Rs. 365 crore for the damage caused by the flood in Hanumangarh, Bharatpur and Alwar. Rajasthan has been affected by the flood twice. It was inundated last year too and the property worth Rs. 365 crore was damaged and this year also it has been affected by the flood and the water from the other States has entered my State.

Our State has suffered loss both by the flood as well as by famine. Rajasthan is a desert area and therefore, the people of desert should get more money. Therefore, Sir, you are presiding the House, the hon. Agriculture Minister - Mishraji is a very good man, very kind and will do many good things. I would like to request him to provide the State Rs. 365 crore instead of Rs. 21 crore as a balance of last year and this year Rs. 300 crore out of which Rs. 100 crore immediately ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : The funds should be provided to you or to Rajasthan?

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : It should be provided to my Rajasthan. I have been deprived of what I was to get and other have snatched share and have misappropriated it and now they have changed over to side and are playing a drama. You know all this. Once you had been sitting with them and had been friendly with these people now that friendship has broken down for some time and both of you changed places.

I hope, the hon. Agriculture Minister will sincerely reply to all my points.

Rajasthan, which is the land of the braves, the land of humanity, the land of Todarmal, the abode of Bhakta Shiromani Meera. As Rajasthan is a desert area, a hilly region and as it has twice faced flood and drought also and as there is deficiency of resources in villages, we should definitely get the financial assistance.

I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI KALPNATH RAI (Ghosi) : Hon'ble Mr. Chairman, Sir, Floods are a national crisis. When I visited my Constituency recently, I saw that heavy erosion was taking place at Dohrighat because of River Ghagra and Saaroj village had been badly affected. Flood is a big national problem. Whenever monsoon Session is held, it coincides with the floods. Thousands of villages would be washed away because of which there would be an uproar throughout the country. Then a Calling Attention Motion would be moved here or discussion would take place during which the Agriculture Minister, the Minister incharge of Flood controls or Irrigation would be present here and all the hon. members would participate in the debate and then the discussion would be over. Thereafter, Monsoon Session, Winter Session and Budget Session would be held throughout the year but nothing concrete will be done about it and again we will have the 'Flood' Session.

AN HON'BLE MEMBER : What do you want to say?

SHRI KALPNATH RAI : I do not want to say anything. I am just stating the problem being faced in the country. The Agriculture Minister is present here but the Minister in charge of irrigation and Water Resources Minister is not present. There is a Minister of State also, even he is not present here. Members of Parliament are present here. Please tell me as to how the Central Government propose to control the flood?

Presently North Bihar, East Uttar Pradesh and Assam are affected by floods. Every year crores of rupees are wasted because of floods. I have made a request to the Government many a times that some controlling mechanism should be set up on the rivers originating from Nepal. The country is facing power crisis. In a country where one laks megawatt electricity can be generated with the help of water resources only 14-15 per cent electricity is being generated in this manner.

19.00 hrs.

Attention is not being paid to the perennial source of electricity. The Government should construct a dam over Sharda, Gandak, Ghaggar and other rivers originating from Nepal so as to generate hydel electricity. In the same area, there is drought on one side of the river and flood on the other side. On one hand, the crops are destroyed because of drought and people are facing attachment of their property and on the other hand, the flood is causing havoc because of which lakhs of cattle are dying, people are dying and houses are getting destroyed. In the present scientific era when mankind has been able to establish contact with the moon and the stars and the science has progressed so much, no concrete and timely action has been taken with regard to the flood control in India even after passing of 50 years.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The Minister would reply at 7,O'clock. So if the House permits, four or five more members will be able to speak because all the members are interested in expressing their views. Thereafter, the Minister would reply.

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (Jhansi) : The issue of Floods is very important. I would like the discussion to be extended till tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Right now those who are sitting here should be allowed to speak. The discussion would be extended by one more hour.

SOME HON'BLE MEMBERS : All right.

SHRI KALPNATH RAI : You are a farmer's son and hail from an agricultural area. You should not speak in such a manner that so much time has been taken and that I should sit down.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You do not listen at all. I called your name twice but you did not stand up. The Minister was given the time of 7 O' clock for giving the reply. I have made a request to the House to extend the time of discussion by one hour so as to accomodate members.

SHRI KALPNATH RAI : I beg your pardon. I pay utmost attention to whatever you say and obey you completely.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Do not just blindly obey me. You should obey only what even is right.

SHRI KALPNATH RAI : The electricity crisis has been discussed time and again in this House. During the Seventh Five Year Plan, Target of generation of 22000 megawatt electricity was fixed. Shri Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister at that time. For the first time the target of 22000 megawatt was achieved. When Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister, he said that 48000 megawatt electricity would be required in India. But thereafter it was stated that there are no resources for generation of 48000 megawatt. So the target was brought down to 38000 megawatt.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Today itself we discussed the issue of energy in the House. The Prime Minister has proposed that it should be taken up discussion. So you should confine your speech a little, though your speech is very good.

SHRI KALPNATH RAI : This issue is connected with the water issue. The factor of non-utilisation of water is also one of the factors for the destruction taking place in Bihar. The entire area of Bihar is affected by flood. They are not getting any electricity.

In 1989 Shri Rajiv Gandhi told, 'we do not have resources to generate 40000 M.W. power therefore we have fixed our target at 38000 M.W.' . In the year 1989 the next Government came to power and did not go in for any five Year Plans. In 1991, yet another Government came to power. They told that though the target was fixed at 38000 M.W. but the present need is to generate 56000 M.W. power but due to shortage of funds, only 32000 M.W. can be generated against the target of 38000 M.W. Currently the Eighth Five Year Plan is on.

And, Santosh Mohan ji, even against this truncated target of 32000 M.W., not even. 15000 M.W. power has been generated so far. Only 14700 M.W. power could be generated....(*Interruptions*) Please listen to me. No other Minister in India has done as much I have done. I don't want be get into any controversy, nor talk of any party. I only want to submit that in our country one lakh M.W. power can be generated through hydro by harnessing floods and energy together. All rivers flowing from Himalayas like Rapti, Boodhi Gandak, Ghaghara, and all other big rivers play havoc in Bihar. These rivers can be utilised to generate hydro-electric power which is the cheapest all over the world as also pollution free. If that power is exploited, by constructing Punchashwari dam, like Bhakra dam, on river Sharda, Bhalu dam on Karnali river flowing from Nepal and from river Saryu and Ghaghra then 10,000 M.W. power only from Karnali, 3000 M.W. power from Panchashwari and 3000 M.W. from Gandak and about 50000 M.W. power can be generated from all the rivers flowing through Bihar. Hydro-electric power is the cheapest the world over.

Sir, whenever we take up the issue, they propose to provide funds for the thermal and not the hydro-sector for which they say they have no priority. If we use hydro power and utilise water for power generation then we can, on the one hand, solve the problem of irrigation and on the other can have sufficient electricity in our country. Our country will also be free of floods and we can arrange water in case of drought. I want to urge only this because there is shortage of time and I would like to urge upon the Agriculture Minister only this that as he belongs to Bihar and has been elected from Madhubani, to please visit the region from Madhubani to Kishanganj on the border of Bengal and Panchashwar on the border of Nepal where you will find that God has given water in such abundance wich can be utilised to our great advantage.

Sir, Shri Rajiv Gandhi had talks with the Government of Nepal 2-3 times and as also the successive Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Shri Chandra Shekhar and our own previous Government also had talks with Nepal. If the Government of Nepal and that of our country sign an agreement and we can utilise their water then we can generate the cheapest power in the world at the rate of 15 paise per unit and save half of India from flood and can produce so much grain in the whole North India, cow belt, the most fertile region, the golden land Bihar, UP and North India through canal system that we can feed the whole of India and the electricity generated can be supplied to the whole country at the cheapest rate and we can achieve the target of 5, 6 and 8 per cent of National growth. The Agriculture Minister should bear this in mind while replying. In the words of Mahatma Gandhiji this is the country of villages and farmers and Gandhi ji, looking at India's villages used to say that science and technology should be introduced and utilised keeping the human beings in mind.

[English]

Science and technology is for man and man is living in villages.

[Translation]

If we want to establish the Swaraj of the dreams of Mahatama Gandhi in those villages then some concrete steps will have to be taken to rid us from such floods. It is good that he is now Agriculture Minister and he has been criticizing us throughout his life. But now you can at least call an all party meeting and have their opinion of all their honourable Members in this regard.

As these people have to face various problems, they will have to face the wrath of their electorate when they approach them....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now that you have covered everything.

SHRI KALPNATH RAI : Please call a meeting of all the big experts, technocrats, bureaucrats, agriculture experts or the people belonging to all parties and having knowledge in the field and take concrete steps in regard to floods so that we can save the country from floods and help the nation march forward.

19.11 hrs.

(Shri Chitta Basu *in the Chair*)

[English]

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam) : Sir, Kalpnathji has rightly pointed out that every year we are discussing about flood and drought. It becomes customary for the Parliament to have a discussion on flood and drought. Every time the Minister gives reply at the end but the matter ends there itself. Nothing happens afterwards.

Out of the total geographical area that we have. that is. about 329 million hectare. one-eighth of the area is flood prone. After the disastrous flood in 1954. a national programme on flood management was launched by the Central Government. I am very sorry to say that though this programme was launched. nothing substantial had been done towards this end. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to review and evaluate the exsting flood control measures. From 1954 onwards we have undertaken a number of programmes. A number of short-term measures were also undertaken by the Government. The State Governments are implementing these programmes according to their climatic and geographic conditions. Yet. we are not in a position to control the occurrence of flood in our country. Every year the devastating flood takes away the lives and property of the poor people of the country. A total new approach to this problem is necessary. This is my humble suggestion.

I would say that research and developmental activities in respect of flood control should be expedited. If we see the programmes that we are implementing since 1995. the research and developmental activities are almost lacking. It is very necessary to prepare & comprehensive master plan for the flood control. The State Government is assessing the total damage caused by these floods. No concrete step has been taken by the State Government. I request that a comprehensive master plan should be chalked out in this regard. This is an area where we can get external assistance also. We can get assistance from the World Bank, IDA and a lot other foreign agencies. External assistance is being given to various countries which are affected by a series of flood. In the past, India had also got a lot of assistance from the external agencies. I would say that there is no monitoring mechanism to see whether the money that is being provided is being utilised properly by the State Governments or not. You will be surprised to know that certain State Governments are diverting the funds earmarked for flood control measures and are instead utilising this money to pay salaries to their employees. A time has come when we should give a fresh look to the already existing flood control measures that are there in our country since 1954.

Mere seminars and discussions will not solve the problem. I have gone throuth the records. From 1954 onwards the Central Government had conducted a lot of seminars in diferent metropolitam cities in which a lot of ministers and delegates participated. It is very unfortunate that nothing concrete came out of them.

I do not want to go into the details of the devastating floods that occurred in the country in which almost all the States are affected. Even today certain parts of the North-East and some other areas continue to be affected by floods.

In Kerala we have a special problem to which almost all the hon. Members have referrend to. We in Kerala have cash crops. When sudden rains and devastating floods occur. cash crops are affected very badly. I have gone through the norms prescribed for providing assistance for cash crops and other crops. Since Shri Chaturanan Mishra is holding the very important portfolio of Agriculture. he has to see that farmers and agriculturists suffered by the recent floods are given proper assistance.

I come from an area where the largest rubber plantation is located. During the last floods and cyclone one-fourth of this rubber plantation got completely damaged. Even though the Government has earmarked funds for disbursement. for the last many years not a single paisa was paid against the cash crops and rubber plantations. Where it is paid, it is too meagre that it is not acceptable to farmers. Farmers are not ready to take that money.

I did not want to go into the sea erosion aspect. A lot of my colleagues have already mentioned about that. Kerala has the longest coastline of 600 km. I know that this subject does not come under the jurisdiction of Shri Chaturanan Mishra and it comes under the Ministry of Water Resources. It is unfortunate that the Central Government has completely neglected our seacoast. We spend money on Defence. This coastline also is a very important boundary from the point of view of Defence. This 600 km of seacoast is completely neglected. It is not protected at all. Vulnerable areas have completely been neglected. For many years now, the sea has been submerging the coast. The poor fishermen are suffering because of this. Roads are completely destroyed. Human life has become very miserable in the coastal areas of Kerala. The Government should take urgent steps for constructing sea-walls and for maintaing the existing sea-walls.

Finally, regarding the Central assistance, I know that Shri Chaturanan Mishra is going to come with an answer that as per the Tenth Finance Commission's recommendations such and such sums of money have been earmarked for different States. But it is necessary to review the recommentations of the Thenth Finance Commission. Floods or no floods, calamities or no calamities. the State Government will get its share. But when there is a devastating flood, when there is a severe cyclone in the coastal areas of the South. the damages should be assessed separately by sending special teams from the Central Government. Funds should be provided to the State Governments according to the damages incurred so that those funds can be distributed to the victims. This is not happening now. It is time to have a fresh look into the Tenth Finance Commission's recommendations.

I do not want to take much of the time of the House. I hope a learned Minister like Shri Chaturanan Mishra will take this aspect into consideration seriously. We discuss about floods in every monsoon Session, but nothing comes out of it.

There are irregularities in the spending of money by the State Governments also. A fresh look into that aspect is also needed. By doing it, flood control measures can be effectively implemented by the State Governments.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let me have your opinion regarding the time of this debate. The list which is before me, contains a number of speakers—of about 13. They are yet to speak. Earlier, it was decided that the House will continue till 8 p.m. Let me have a benefit of your opinion. How long have we to continue?

SHRI ANIL BASU : Each hon. Member may be given two minutes.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : If you want that everybody should speak then you should restrict yourself to two minutes. Thank you.

Shri Ram Kripal Yadav...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : That includes the Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, the hon. Minister is excluded. He can take as much time as he likes. You can speak as long as you like.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : Then, it will go beyond 9 p.m...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Then, it is left to your discretion.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are several Members who want to speak on this subject and the time upto 8 p.m. has been fixed for the discussion on this subject...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : It has already been decided by the Business Advisory Committee that the debate should conclude today.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : In the Business Advisory Committee it was decided that at Seven O' clock the Minister of Agriculture will reply. That was the decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN : That is all right.

SHRI ANIL BASU : It was left to the Chair ...*(Interruptions)* Is it the fault of the Chair?...*(Interruptions)* What is wrong with the Chair?...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the time was alloted upto 7 p.m. The number of speakers is large since this subject is very serious. Many members want to speak. I would like to urge that the full discussion till 8 p.m. should be conducted. Let the hon. Minister reply tomorrow because there are several Members to speak on this subject today.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let me explain the position. The Business Advisory Committee has advised that this debate should conclude today. It was earlier suggested that the hon. Minister will reply to the debate at seven O' clock in the evening. And then since there were a large number of participants, it was decided that it may be further extended by an hour, including the Minister's time. Now, as I have told you earlier that there are still 13 Members to speak. If everybody is to be allowed to speak, then you suggested - some of the hon. Members - two minutes each. Then that may be accepted ....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : This restriction should have been put from the very beginning. Why should the tailenders only suffer?....*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Then I have to go by the sense of the House.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

PRO. RASA SINGH RAWAT : We have been sitting here since morning to speak....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : I know the problem. Please sit down. We have been the victims of these difficulties. I am quite aware of this problem. But, please say what is to be done. Is it the sense of the House to continue the debate up to nine O' clock or is it to be postponed to tomorrow?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER : Tomorrow after six O'clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let us continue till eight O'clock.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : Thirteen hon. Members are left. You cannot stop anybody within two minutes. So, you can give four or five minutes to each hon. Member. As many as possible can speak up to eight O'clock. Tomorrow, if somebody else is left out they may speak and the hon. Minister will reply. That will be a better idea.....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : My point is that there is a Call Attention Motion tomorrow. Another Call Attention Motion on Sugar also is there. So, you decide accordingly.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU : We can postpone it to some other day. It should be a proper debate. That is what we think.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : I do not say that you do not think proper. I am just reminding the Chair that tomorrow also there is a Calling Attention Motion on Sugarcane pricing etc.....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : This is the procedure in this House, After Question Hour, Matters Under Rule 377, Zero Hour, Calling Attention Motion and then other subjects will come.

Then other subjects will come.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think let us come to this decision. We shall continue till 8.00 p.m. and the rest will follow tomorrow.

Mr. Yadav, please restrict yourself to not more than five minutes.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for providing me an opportunity to speak. The House, today, has been discussing on the subject of natural calamities for quite a long time. I think that the House is rightly expressing its concern, specially several hon. Members have acquainted the House with the flood situation of their respective States and I support the suggestion that there should be discussion on the flood situation in every session of the Parliament. But even after the discussion, no concrete measure is taken, no solution is found and as a result the poor people of the country have always to face the menace of the flood. But the discussion will understood to be meaningful only when a concrete solution is found by the Government. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I through you, would like to state that there are many parts in the country which are flood prone and they hare to face every year the devastation of flood in which property worth crores of rupees is damaged. Our State too falls in the same category and the hon. Minister is also from Bihar, the State I hail from. Almost half part of Bihar comes in the grip of the flood every year and particularly 22 districts of north Bihar are damaged every year by the devastating flood. The flood claims many lives, roads are damaged, the crops and the houses of the poor people are also damaged and ultimately people of that area have to pine for flood. I would like to give the figures of the last year. Last year the flood in Bihar damaged the property worth Rs. 1200 crore and around two hundred people lost their lives. The flood, which came all of a sudden in Bihar particularly in Bhagalpur and Banka districts, damaged all the roads, all the small and big bridges, all the crops and the houses of the poor. This year also the 12 districts of north Bihar are badly affected by the devastating flood and even today the area needs relief and rescue works. But, I think, that the Union Government has not provided funds for the flood from the National Calamity Relief Fund.

Not only this, last year when the State of Bihar was affected by the flood, the Union Government, on the demand of the State Government had allocated Rs. 21 crore but the Union Government has not released that amount to the State Government so far. I, through you, would like to urge upon the Agriculture Minister and the Government of India that the amount of Rs. 21 crore should be immediately made available to the State Government.

[English]

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : The Ministry of Agriculture has already sanctioned it. It is pending with the Ministry of Finance. I just wanted to remind the hon. Member about this.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : When you, on behalf of the Government of India, have already sanctioned the amount, that should be made available to the State Government.

[English]

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA : All of us know the way we function.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : I, through you, would like to urge upon the hon. Prime Minister to make available the amount of Rs. 21 crore sanctioned from the National Calamity Relief Fund to Bihar Government immediately.

Sir, geographically, India has 3200 lakh hectares of land out of which 320 lakh hectares of land is affected by flood in one way or other, every year. The Government of India has been managing to control the flood since 1994. After so many years and despite being fully aware of the situation, the Government of India is not taking any concrete measure. I demand that the Government of India to think over the matter seriously so that the loss of life and property on such a large scale every year could be prevented and the poor people could be provided relief.

The flood does not damage property of the states only but the property of Union Government too. There are railway lines in every State and the other properties, belonging to the Union Government are also there which are damaged every year. The flood claims the lives of a number of livestocks and the people. Unless concrete and affective steps are taken to prevent the floods, it will be impossible to escape the damage and loss due to it. It is not the loss of any particular State but it is a national loss.

Therefore, after putting some suggestions, I will conclude my speech. Dera a vast area under Danapur segment of Patna district in my Parliamentary Constituency, where around one lakh people reside, is affected by the flood every year. Due to the flood in Ganga and Sone rivers, soil erosion on large scale takes place there resulting in heavy loss to the poor residing in that area. Since the State Government has resource-crunch, it, despite having good intentions, finds itself unable to prevent the soil erosion. Therefore, I would like to urge upon the Government of India to take some concrete steps so that lakhs of people residing in Dera area of Danapur could be saved and the area could also be saved from the soil erosion taking place every year.

As an hon. Member has just mentioned, the problem of the flood that we have to face every year, Rajivji had said, was due to rivers flowing through Nepal. The rivers that flow from Nepal to India cary heavy quantum of water with them which is transformed into the flood after coming to India. For example Gandak, Boodhi Gandak, Kamala Bagan, Kosi and Bagmati are such rivers due to which a vast area of Bihar is inundated every year. I demand that the Government of India should discuss this issue with the Government of Nepal. Such discussions have taken place many times in the past but no concrete solution could be found. I demand that there should be a pact at international level. These rivers are the flood prone and Bihar is affected by the flood, every year. Therefore, unless a pact is signed on this matter or a permanent solution is found, those people of Bihar could not be saved from the devastation of the flood. The problem of silt piling up in heavy quantity is also there, therefore, desilting measures should also be taken. Gradually, the width of the each river is increasing causing the overflow of water. Therefore, the silt should be dredged out so that the flood could be prevented and the people of Bihar as well as the other parts of India could get a sigh of relief.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : I would like to give a suggestion. Unless the Ganga Flood Control Programme is completed, Bihar cannot get rid of the flood. It is resulting into flood in different areas of Bihar and the people are suffering...*(Interruptions)* Mr. Chairman, Sir, many hon. Members are objecting. I never interrupted any Member while speaking. The time for other Members has also been fixed. I shall not take much time. I, through you, would like to urge upon the Union Government to take some concrete steps to save the country as well as Bihar from the devastation of the flood so that Bihar and the crops of the farmers could be saved and the normal life of the people could also be saved from being disturbed.

I, through you, would like to raise one more demand. There is a scheme of constructing pucca houses for the poor whose houses are damaged in the flood because they are made of mud and straw. They should be provided more money to built pucca and solid houses so that they could get a sigh of relief.

I would also like to demand to implement the crop insurance scheme on large scale since ours is a farmers country and the farmers die or injured on large scale. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to implement this scheme in elaborate form. I hope, the hon. Minister would pay attention towards the other parts of the country specially the flood affected people of Bihar and find out a concrete solution for them. With these words, I conclude my speech.

[English]

SHRI T. GOVINDAN (Kesargoda) : Mr. Chairman, I am going to raise some small issues. My friends from Kerala have already explained the damages due to flood in Kerala. So, I need not repeat them.

I would like to point out one or two things only. The recommendations of the Tenth Finance Commission are not sufficient. The Central Government has to reconsider the recommendations of the Tenth Finance Commission because of high inflation and devaluation of rupee. So, I humbly request the Central Government to reform the recommendations of the Tenth Finance Commission.

Secondly, Kerala is facing a serious problem of sea erosion. The Government should consider the sea coast as the international border of the country. The Central Government should take steps to prevent sea erosion. Every year, thousands of acres of land is being lost in Kerala due to tidal attack and thousands of houses and coconut trees collapse. It is the bounden duty of the Central Government to prevent sea erosion. The Kerala Government is having a meagre exchequer and it cannot construct sea walls. Hence, the Central Government should take the responsibility of constructing sea walls.

With these words I conclude my speech.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please try to be brief.

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir I always try to be brief, therefore, there is no need to say so.

Sir, first I would like to say that several hon. Members have taken part in this debate and they have spoken about their respective States and areas. I have been taking part in such discussion since the Eighth Lok Sabha and now speaking in Eleventh Lok Sabha. But I would like to point out that after debate on such an important issue the Government maintains silence on this issue and no attention is paid towards it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, flood problem has become a curse and no Government could rescue the country from it. The loss due to flood could not be compensated even today. The most fertile land of our villages has been filled with sand and stones due to flood as a result thereof this land has been useless. Now it is not suitable for cultivation. Owners of this land have been ruined and rendered homeless. They are on verge of starvation and compelled to take up some other means to earn their livelihood.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, late Shri K.L. Rao had prepared and submitted to this House a masterplan to save the country from the flood problem. But this plan was dumped and no action was taken in this regard. Had the Masterplan been implemented, there would be no need to debate this issue of flood and country would have got some relief. But no attention was paid towards it and the country suffers a huge loss due to flood.

Mr. Chairman, we debate this issue in different manners and feel that we have performed our duty by discussing the issue.

But I would like to say that the huge loss suffered by the country due to floods and thousands of millions and billions rupees being spent for protecting the country from it, this all could have been saved if that masterplan was implemented. Today we are not able to save the life and property being destroyed by flood. So, I request you to implement that masterplan to save the whole country from the curse of floods.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, due to paucity of time while concluding, I would like to say that Bihar has suffered a huge loss due to floods and therefore sufficient funds should be given to Bihar Government so that it could protect the people from floods. With this I conclude.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA (Firozabad) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon. Members have expressed their anguish in this House over the problems being faced by the flood affected States in the country. When I was elected for the 10th Lok Sabha, this issue was being discussed at that time. Similarly, during the year 1991-92-93 this issue was debated time and again. But what is the use of such debate? This House has debated the flood problem time and again whether this problem is faced by Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana or any other State.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, flood has caused a loss of Rs. 742 crore in Agra-Firozabad area of Western Uttar Pradesh. Lakhs of hectare of land has been affected badly. Crops have been destroyed and several houses have been damaged. What is the justification of this debate? I want that it should be taken seriously. Policies have been formulated for it time and again but the same could not be implemented as corruption on large scale is prevailing in the present Government. Hon. Chief Minister has given an assurance to provide Rs. 50 thousand to the families whose houses and cultivable land was affected by floods, but I would like to say that this amount is not sufficient.

I demand that this amount should be increased from Rs. 50 thousand to Rs. 2 lakh. Secondly, the flood policy should be formulated unanimously after getting the views of the leaders of all the political parties.

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE (Ratnagiri) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, we heard the views of the Members of 8th Lok Sabha. We generally discuss the issues on flood, drought and other natural calamities in the House but we forget them after leaving this House. We cannot control natural calamities but the only thing we can do is that we can provide relief to people and places affected by the natural calamities.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the people of Konkan area of Maharashtra have suffered a huge loss due to Cyclone this year. I hail from Konkan. It comprises of the four districts, Thana, Raigarh, Ratnagiri and Sindhu. There are mountain ranges in the east and Arabian Sea in the West of Konkan. This is a hilly area. The whole Konkan area is surrounded by sea. The area faces natural calamities every year. This year cyclon has caused huge loss to Konkan.

In this House while replying to an oral question, hon. Minister of Agriculture has stated that nine persons were killed in Mumbai in an incident of fall of a wall, 40 persons were killed by striking of lightening, houses were damaged in Ratnagiri and Sunandadurg area of Konkan due to heavy rains. Fishermen live along the shore of Arabian sea. As per my information about 22 fishermen have been reported missing during Cyclon, perhaps they have lost their lives in the sea. But it has not been mentioned in the reply given by hon. Minister of Agriculture. I request you to collect information regarding the loss suffered by these fishermen.

I would like to draw your attention towards an important point. Natural Calamities struck almost every year. People suffer and hope for relief. At the time of such natural calamities whether it is caused by flood, drought or Cyclon, people of this country first render their help to the affected, followed by the Government. It is a fact that humanity is still there in our people.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the State Government has imposed ban on fishing after 7th of June. It is very essential because heavy rain pours during June and July and Cyclon struck the region which cause huge loss to fishermen. Fishermen are compelled to go for fishing inspite of imposition of ban because fishing is their occupation. They are compelled to take the risk of their lives. I urge upon the Government to provide compensation to those fishermen who become the victims of such incidents and whose ships are damaged therein before the date of imposition of the ban i.e. 7th June. The Government should pay attention to it and should provide compensation to the affected fishermen of our State which is surrounded by the Sea.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Arakal.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): May I make a request to complete the debate today itself becasue tomorrow, there is so much of business?...*(Interruptions).*

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : This issue has already been raised and hon. Chairman has given his ruling on it. The time of the House uptill 8'o clock is not sufficient because every Member wish to speak on this issue...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : It is possible that we may sit for one more hour and complete the debate and Minister can also reply today itself? Tomorrow, it will be impossible as there is so much of business. That is why, it was discussed in the Business Advisory Committee where Speaker was also present and it was decided that we must sit late today...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Have you made arrangements for those hon. Members who are here since the morning...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : There will be no problem if this discussion is continued tomorrow also.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : There are still nine Members to speak.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Only ten Members are sitting here.

MR. CHAIRMAN : As I stated earlier, the Business Advisory Committee requested the House to complete the debate today. Therefore, if we have to accommodate one and all, naturally, we will have to sit either today for longer house or tomorrow.

SHRI ANIL BASU : It has already been agreed by all sections of the House that Members who want to participate in the discussion can participate today and Minister will reply tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Is it the sense of the House?

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Mr. Chairman, Sir. kindly listen to me. My point is that you have already given your decision and have specified the number of Speakers as well. The hon. Members who are to speak, have left the House after your decision, presuming that the discussion has been postponed till tomorrow. As a discussion has been taken it would be unfair to the hon. members who have already left. I request you to extend the time of the House upto 8 p.m. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Those who have left are not interested in the discussion. We are sitting here even after participating in the discussion. This is not good. Those who are not interested have left. You cannot do like this.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let him speak. Mr. Arakal, please continue.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : Mr. Chairman, it has already been decided...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : There should be a consensus on this. The supporters of the ruling party are only agreeing to it. You are not seeking our opinion. There should be a consensus...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI XAVIER ARAKAL : May I continue?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, please continue.

SHRI XAVIER ARAKAL : Thank you, Mr. Chairman Sir. This House...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : The Members who are here and interested to participate in this debate may speak now. It is a serious debate. Do not fracture this debate...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Sir, this is a serious matter...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : I have heard you. You should also listen to me...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SRIKANT JENA : Sir, those Members who are still in the House and interested to participate in the debate, let them participate, let them complete their speeches and hon. Minister can reply tomorrow.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : You have given a decision that we will sit till 8 O' clock today and this discussion will be resumed tomorrow.

The hon. Minister may reply tomorrow.

20.00 hrs.

[English]

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : I request the Chair to allow the hon. Members to speak. We can accommodate many hon. Members today itself.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : If it is your wish, we are leaving and then you may do whatever you like to.

[English]

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : Mr. Chairman, Sir, it was decided earlier that the discussion would continue upto seven O'clock and at seven o'clock the hon. Minister of Agriculture would reply to the discussion. Then, the time of the House was extended upto 8 o'clock and we agreed to that. Now, we are again extending it further. It is not fair. I think we should continue the discussion tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing can be done without your cooperation.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : We are prepared to sit even after 7.00 p.m. tomorrow if we are asked to do so.

[English]

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : Tomorrow, if you are prepared to sit till midnight we are prepared for it. Tomorrow, after the Government business is over we will take up this issue.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : All right.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House now stands adjourned.

20.01 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, July 18, 1996/Asadha 27, 1918 (Saka).
